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**BRIDGING BIBLICAL FAITH AND ECOLOGY FOR ADULTS
AN EXPERIENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

A Field Project
Presented to
The Faculty of
Western Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

By
Linda Houck
May 2009

ABSTRACT

Understanding the implications of an ecological view of nature for a Christian has recently become a growing interest to the Evangelical community. Until recently resources for exploring how ecological understanding might be incorporated into Christian thought and action have been scarce and difficult to find. Books and internet resources are now emerging, but these represent only a fraction of potential resources and approaches to environmental education for Christians who desire to connect their faith with ecological understanding. This project aims to move beyond the passive and theoretical perspectives of print and media discussions to practical encounters with the natural world. Information comes from print and internet sources, but greater engagement and personal involvement is possible from direct exposure of the natural world informed by these sources. Infusing experiential environmental education programs with biblical themes provides a way for Christians to understand and appreciate their place in the natural world upon which human society depends. This field-based program offers interested individuals with a resource for doing this sort of environmental education. It presents a practical workshop which can be implemented by a facilitator without great cost or experience in doing such programs. Directions and suggestions for implementation are provided.

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I would like to give acknowledgement to Dr. John Miles and Wendy Walker. Your advisement has enabled me to present this work in the best light. A hearty thanks to both of you.

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Activity booklet	Pocket material
Praise songs CD	Pocket material

INTRODUCTION

As an active participant in the Christian community since 1980, I have had the opportunity of observing a variety of churches. As one who moves frequently, my exposure to church bodies ranges from traditional to contemporary, cultural in diversity, U.S. locations and abroad, within denominational construct and without, and those focused on a variety of core missions.

During my exposure to these church bodies my educational experience, whether my mind was consciously or unconsciously focused on message themes, I have never heard one message on anything concerning stewardship of creation. It is possible that there was some reference to nature. However, there were no messages given which dominantly focused on environmental stewardship or our responsibility to preserve creation. To the contrary, what I did hear about environmental challenges was in effect a problem for the rest of the world to solve, not the responsibility of the Body of Christ. All instruction in this regard was abandoned once the foundation of how the world began was established. My question then is how can anyone be a good steward if they do not know how, or even why they should be? We should not ignore the stewardship principal. We should not ignore such an important subject as taking care of God's design.

In 2002 I began to take a spiritual journey to find definitive answers which could connect my faith to the wild. I found few resources from which to draw. Conducting research was frustrating. Since then a trend has emerged in the Christian community. Environmental education has finally begun to reach this audience. Now, as I draw upon the wisdom and knowledge of others, I find most of these resources to be media driven. While most of these

sources educate the Christian community from an internet base, they are not experiential in nature or applied with formal lessons, and are therefore limited in their capacity to draw learners into a strong connection to the natural world through the learner's physical senses. Neither are they capable of giving learners a connection which creates awe for the spirit.

GOALS FOR THE PROJECT

REGIONAL SITE VISITS: AVENUES FOR LEARNING

Initially I began to design a program with lessons which could be a program in itself. I found this to be awkward and it served the point that I needed to understand the difference between a lesson and a program. This lead me to investigate the question of how a program comes together. My advisor Wendy Walker suggested I look into doing some regional site visits to observe their programs. So during the spring and summer of 2008 I made visits to three regional facilities. I observed life and programs at Holden Village, and observed programs at Whidbey Institute and Camp Lutherwood. My intention was to make visits to other facilities within the region but did not receive adequate responses from my inquiries.

Holden Village

Holden Village is a community within the U. S. Forest Service land boundary which they lease. It is isolated by water along Lake Chelan and wilderness of eastern Washington. Although it is rustic/camp like, it is also a retreat center busy with a few hundred people which maintain it throughout the year, although less populated in the winter months. The Lutheran church acquired this camp from the owner of a mining company which collapsed when that market crashed.

I made two visits to this facility. On the first visit I stayed for one week, working full-time in exchange for room, board, and recreation. On arrival I was quickly whisked away and integrated into this community. Not only did I spend time with those I worked with, I also found other staff and various visitors with whom to easily converse. This interaction is integral to the life of this community. Since many modern conveniences are absent, like television, phones, and unlimited internet service, relationships are built without the usual barriers which these conveniences often bring.

Apart from working hours, staff members are required to participate in occasional garbage duty (waste disposal), dining room tasks, and to attend vespers services every evening. All of these elements along with the numerous activities available create a unique atmosphere in which to live. Both ecological and biblical subjects are integrated into vespers, as well as occasional teaching during various activities.

During my observations at Holden I wondered how these two elements were integrated into everyday life. I asked a long-term staff member how life there integrates faith and ecology which can be perceived by people who visit short-term. He stated that they have teachers sometimes in the summer which provide this specifically. The two elements are blended, because it is necessary to work at achieving a balance and not emphasize one at the expense of the other. So they are continually trying to blend the two.

I also asked my roommate, who was working there for five months, if she had sensed any connection of ecology to her faith. She reflected upon this and finally stated that although her faith was fused with a connection to the natural world by the on-going Lutheran teachings, there were some aspects of staying at Holden Village which helped her see this

more, like garbage duty and food production. Garbology easily shows how garbage needs to be dealt with locally and in the world. It includes picking up all that is thrown out by the community, separated, then every part disposed of in the best possible method. Food production brings a strong connection to understanding how resources are acquired. Meals are simple and food is acquired from the most ecological sources whenever possible. I also asked her if there were any habits which she and her family changed which were an effect from visiting Holden. She listed driving less among other things.

I wondered if these effects were evident with others who had spent limited time there. I made a second visit to Holden Village later as a guest, which gave me ample time to do informal interviews with various people. As I spoke with others the interview process took on more of a fluid direction. Conversations with each person were specific to them and built upon how the participant responded to questions. Overall, my questions probed to find how ecology and faith were evident in their on-going lives, and if Holden had a part to play in that. Holden Village seemed to make somewhat of a positive impression upon each person I interviewed. The one connecting thread I found throughout almost every person I interviewed was the element of having an experience in the natural world at an early age. So Holden Village became a place of refuge and retreat through which their experiences of nature, began in their childhood, could continue.

Other activities I participated in were listening to speakers, going on structured walks with them, and attending vespers and other services. While these were not a vehicle which combined ecology and faith, they did focus on one or the other in the same environment. I concluded from these visits that there is need for opportunities to blend faith and ecology.

Holden Village offers such an opportunity for those who have the means and can take the time to go there.

Whidbey Institute

Whidbey Institute is located in south Whidbey Island of Washington state. I made a visit to this facility to observe a day program. Mainly this program was for relaxation but included activities which people could participate in if they desired. Although I was observing the director requested that I become a participant and not merely be an observer. I sat in the morning opening circle and the afternoon closing circle, and ate with the other participants at mid-day. During the early afternoon I interviewed the day's facilitator Cathy Whitmire. I asked her to describe how she puts together a program. She uses a skeleton framework and then fills it in with various parts. An outline of her framework is as follows: Welcome, orientation, safety, comfort, confidentiality, "said hope for the day," and an opening and closing circle. An opening circle connects a group. A closing circle is a way to reconnect with a larger group if it gets split up during the day. Also included is a theme for the day, as in leaves falling to represent letting go, music, poetry, reflection period of 15-20 minutes, breathing exercises, body movement, and art activities in the winter.

The program also includes offerings by participants, walks, songs, stories, a quote time, and spiritual direction that includes "council like sessions" and reflection on personal needs.

Later that day during free-time I interviewed an acquaintance of mine. She was an intern at Whidbey Institute, and was in the residency program at Wilderness Awareness School in King County. The areas of a program which she focused on were 1. altars, as in

symbolic items to resemble an idea of the real thing-bright colored scarves as fire, etc. 2. What are the expectations of the participants? These can be shared in the opening circle. 3. Adults can do kidlike activities if they are made to be serious. 4. “Rhythm of the Day” for multiple day programs. Each day has a theme but the same core activities each day, as in opening and closing circles, mid-day session, etc. Each day has these core elements but are presented as elements for the theme of each day. 5. The center of the day should be experiential. 6. Having something to take home with them will carry the lesson into their homes and give them a chance to study further.

During the two interview sessions I began to see how spiritual concepts and organic elements can merge in order to connect nature and spiritual life. This was the beginning of the process I went through in designing the current program. Programming then made sense to me.

Camp Lutherwood

Camp Lutherwood is located along the north shore of Lake Samish about 10 miles South of Bellingham, Washington. I visited this facility to observe the program of the day. At the time a week-long children’s program was in progress. I stayed from morning until the end of the day after the evening program.

During the day, elementary aged campers were taken through activities of entire group meetings on to sub-group meetings. Group meetings consisted of services designed with children in mind. The large group participated in singing songs and hearing stories with a religious message attached. During sub-group times, activities varied. Some consisted of learning from a story, learning by doing, or plain recreational play.

During some of the day's sub-group activities there were overtones of an environmental theme. One lesson had a couple of scriptures mentioned but not read or referenced completely. They were merely alluded to. These were mentioned at the beginning of the lessons to support the reasoning of taking care of the natural world. The lessons were in essence to experience their natural surroundings. One lesson had campers lead around blind folded to feel the contours of a tree. Another had them trying to find a pen under a pile of items from nature in order for them to notice what's around them. Another lesson focused around survival in the outdoors but was not framed with scripture or an ecological indicator.

DISCUSSION

Holden Village is unique in that it is the closest example that I could find of a residential setting which combines faith and ecology. Residents which stay for any length are immersed into a world which is distinctly different from their own. While some may visit this place to simply get away from the usual settings, it is possible with even the least amount of effort to become attached to the place and feel the influences of surroundings. Staff, visitors, and facility practices have a direct effect upon all who make their way to this place, because of the integral patterns there and the physical setting.

The two interview sessions at Whidbey Institute shaped my understanding of how to put a program together and I have used in this project many of the parts of their programs. The concept of using a variety of components to create a program cinched my understanding of the difference between a lesson and a program. A lesson I understand now is one component or part of a full program.

Of the three facilities I visited, Camp Lutherwood was the least helpful, while the other two were very helpful. Camp Lutherwood did give me a glimpse of how a program is ordered and run.

Visiting these facilities was very insightful. Mainly it allowed me to understand the difference between writing a lesson and designing a program. It was also very helpful to see programs distinctly different from those I had been a part of in my undergraduate program. These examples allowed me to think in more abstract directions, considering how ecology and faith can be combined in a cohesive way, using a variety of spiritual and environmental aspects. In my experience this is the integration which continues to be absent from the evangelical community at large. These examples give credibility to my reasoning for using this kind of education.

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

This project is my attempt to begin filling in the void of faith-based environmental education by providing others with a tangible resource for educating the Christian community. My intent is to give simple forms of instruction which can be easily applied. The program is structured for 8 to 12 participants. I have used music as a means to draw in the learner, through their spirit, so as to allow reverence for the Creator and appreciation for his creation to be understood from the beginning. I have structured each lesson using scriptural evidence to sound out a person's responsibility to preserve the natural world. Worship music and scripture are the main differences when comparing my work with secular environmental education field programs. Scripture is God breathed and allows for a change of heart in the

hearer. I have used natural elements and examples whenever possible to bring an organic feel into the mix. Parts of the program which are ceremonial in structure make a connection to the context of a sanctuary or worship setting in order to further bridge natural and spiritual integration. I have also used material from a variety of sources. Some of these are taken from Christian sources while others are not. There is an old saying-“The bible is all truth but not all truth is in the bible”. I take the position that all is up for grabs and can be used if it does not conflict with scripture. The user of this material may use it in the manner which is right for them.

My main intention is to make a strong impact upon this community which might dispel ignorance about environmental connection, to bring a sense of wonder about the natural workings of earth, and to make a distinction between what is caring for what God calls *good*, and what is an unintended focus on *worship of nature*. It is also my intention to instill a sense of responsibility in the community which might be regarded as of primary importance for life missions; that adults can teach their children to value the world they live in, and therefore have a rippling effect of change. One main goal for this report is to provide others with a plan which they can use in the face of difficult resource gleaning. This is intended to be a jumping off point for ease of working in this area in hopes that progress in this valuable work can be made by others who might possess respect and influence in their own church. I hope that through this program and ones like it such progress can be made which will bring about a behavioral change within the Body of Christ so that stewarding the natural world will become the norm.

THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

This project is written with a specific audience in mind. Since calling the audience Christian may not describe the community clearly enough, a statement of faith is given. Overall, it is the author's position that a literal interpretation of the Bible be used in presenting these materials. There were no enhancements from church doctrines or scholarly commentaries. As well, it has been my intent to use every scripture within the context of its chapter. For ease and consistency, all scriptures are taken from the New International Version (NIV) translation.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

I believe in:

- The only true God, the almighty Creator of all things, existing eternally in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—full of love and glory.
- The unique divine inspiration, entire trustworthiness, and authority of the Bible.
- The value and dignity of all people: created in God's image to live in love and holiness, but alienated from God and each other because of our sin and guilt, and justly subject to God's wrath.
- Jesus Christ, fully human and fully divine, who lived as a perfect example, who assumed the judgment due sinners by dying in our place, and who was bodily raised from the dead and ascended as Savior and Lord.
- Justification by God's grace to all who repent and put their faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

- The indwelling presence and transforming power of the Holy Spirit, who gives to all believers a new life and a new calling to obedient service.
- The unity of all believers in Jesus Christ, manifest in worshiping and witnessing churches making disciples throughout the world.
- The victorious reign and future personal return of Jesus Christ, who will judge all people with justice and mercy, giving over the unrepentant to eternal condemnation but receiving the redeemed into eternal life.

RHYTHM OF THE DAY PROGRAM EXPLAINED

This program consists of various parts which fit together to form a whole which is called Rhythm of the Day. Each part allows you, the teacher, to progress through the program within a theme, which you will choose prior to the activity day. The parts should follow the theme which you have chosen and allow the entire program to flow in this vein throughout. Lessons are the core for the entire program, so themes should be chosen to reflect and compliment the lessons. Choosing a theme allows for continuity and keeps the main program on track. It also enables the parts to connect to each other cohesively so that participants may retain more information from their experience. Each part is included to reinforce the lessons because the entire program is more than the sum of its parts. Lessons are the core of the program. They can be taught apart from the program; however, all the program background information should be used if lessons are taught separately. An outline of the program is given first and then each part is explained below. Since this is designed for a full day's worth of activities, a lunch time break should given taken at a convenient time, so remember to insert it into the schedule.

ORDER OF PROGRAM

While all parts work together some may be considered serious, while others are intended to be fun. There is no problem with ordering the parts in a different sequence, but thought should given consideration so that each part can flow well into the previous and following parts.

PREPARATION

Before running the program all preparations should be completed. Each part of the program will include any preparation notes which are needed. Prior to the opening circle a prop should be constructed which represents an altar. This simply means that a low profile, but easily visible prop is stationed at the inner circle of where the group will meet as a beginning and ending location. It should be stationed in the middle of the group so that everyone can see it. The prop does not suggest worship of the altar, but is present so that a structure helps to focus the group. Altars can resemble a variety of things. Examples can include a low-burning campfire, an artfully created rock structure, a wooden cross with colorful fabric draped over it, three large lit candles, or anything which can help participants to keep a spiritual focus. Think natural objects which symbolize a spiritual element. Keeping simplicity and minimal is key. Try repeating a single item instead of multiple single items. See figures 1 and 2.

This program is designed with adults in mind. Group size would be efficient with 12 but can be as few as six. Lessons should be taught in the following locations, 1. Getting to Know the Forest- An ideal setting would include a hiking trail in a location that has no visual or audible distractions from modern influences like machine noise. 2. Generation Less- should be done where media equipment is accessible and can accommodate clear viewing by all participants, 3. It's a Matter of Survival-located in either an inside or outside place in which participants can learn free of distractions. Outside locations for this lesson can include a forest, a beach, a desert, a streamside or lake side setting, etc. Also you should be familiar with the site you intend to use prior to the program day.



Figure 1: Example of an altar.



Figure 2: Example of an altar.

As a suggestion, you might want to continue the day program into the evening to allow the group to develop more community. In this case, follow the sequence in Rhythm of the Day to the end, then follow with an event such as a potluck. You also might want to have some kind of informal campfire program, have a speaker give a message, have a vespers service, give communion, present a nature slide show, etc. A number of events are possible. As an added bonus you might also turn the program into a multi-day series by having the participants stay at a retreat center or camp, then have a different theme for each day with a single lesson taught for each day of the retreat. In this case the Rhythm of the Day would have a new theme each day connected to each lesson.

RHYTHM OF THE DAY PROGRAM OUTLINE

- I. Opening circle
 - a. welcome and staff introductions: *a few minutes*
 - b. opening prayer: *1-2 minutes*
 - c. give a quote: *1 minute*
 - d. expectations for the day: *5-7 minutes*
 - e. read the creation story or devotional: *4-5 minutes*
- II. Ice breakers, games, and challenge activities: *10-30 minutes*
- III. Explaining what worship is: *2-3 minutes*
- IV. Lead first praise sing: *20 minutes minimum*
- V. Propose care of creation information: *5-10 minutes*
- VI. Travel to trail gathering site if applicable: *time depends upon how much travel you do*
- VII. Teach lesson(s): *see individual lessons for time*

VIII. Do more games or challenge activities: *10-30 minutes*

IX. Go on short hike or walk if participants are willing and time allows for it: *time varies*

X. Closing Circle

- a. poem or short essay: *5-7 minutes*
- b. lead second praise sing: *10 minutes or more*
- c. ask what the group has gotten out of the day: *10 minutes*
- d. pledge: *5 minutes*
- e. conduct offerings time: *1-2 minutes for each participant*
- f. give benediction, blessing, or read prayer: *1-5 minutes*

RHYTHM OF THE DAY OUTLINE EXPLAINED

I. OPENING CIRCLE

a. Welcome and staff introductions: a few minutes

You should be ready to begin the program when participants arrive. Have everyone join in a circle around the altar. A circle is more inclusive than having a leader who is in front of the group. It symbolizes community with the group rather than the appearance of a hierarchy. Participants should be welcomed into the place and to each other. Telling them you are glad they are present brings a sense of comfort and inclusion. Asking participants to introduce themselves by giving their name and answering a simple question will help to connect everyone. Simple questions can be anything of interest from what's your favorite tree, to why did you come today. You can get the ball rolling by saying your name and giving an answer to the question. For an example of a gathering place see figure 3.



Figure 3: Example of a gathering site.¹

b. Opening prayer: 1-2 minutes

Emphasis should be centered on creation and thankfulness. Prayers are not read from text but should be said from the heart. *Example: O LORD, we acknowledge you as maker of heaven and earth. You are great! We give thanks to you for all that you have made, and we look to you in our learning. May you open our eyes to see your glory revealed in the living world, and may our day be full of wonder in all that we discover in your creation. Amen.*

¹

http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.accotinkuuc.org/circle5.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.accotinkuuc.org/AUUC_Circle.html&usg=__ISAD6LYqH5vfpMUPwx2JxvYU0f8=&h=300&w=400&sz=11&hl=en&start=10&tbnid=cotgEIOkHRKNLM:&tbnh=93&tbnw=124&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dpeople%2Bcircled%2Baround%2Boutdoor%2Baltar%26gbv%3D2%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DG

c. Quote: 1 minute

“The voice of nature is always encouraging.” Henry David Thoreau

See appendix for more quotes

d. Expectations for the day: 5-7 minutes

Giving everyone an idea of what’s to come will help alleviate a multitude of questions throughout the day, and it will help to establish a sense of structure. One way to do this is to have a breakdown of the day’s events written on a white board. Then read the list while everyone is looking at the board. You should also explain about giving an offering at the end of the day. This will enable them to think about it during the day. Offerings are explained in the “offerings section”.

e. Creation story or Devotional: 4-5 minutes***Creation story introduction***

Creation, it’s where it all begins. This is the foundation of understanding nature from a biblical perspective, and the principal of stewarding the earth. The Creation story is given to read to the participants as a basis for the entire program. It is also a way to ease into the activities of the day which will set a tone of centering on biblical thought.

CREATION STORY IMAGINED

Before time began, all was void and saturated in darkness. Then God said, “Let there be LIGHT.” At once the illumination enveloped the earth in spectacular light, and it began to come alive in the brilliance.

God was pleased and separated the light from the darkness.
The light He called “day,” and the darkness “night” -the very first day.

On the second day God separate the water above from the water below with an expanse from one end of the earth to the next. He called the expanse sky. And God said, “Let the water below be gathered to one place”, and the mighty seas emerged, filling the mass of the depths. Then He said, “Let dry ground appear”, and the seas began to level out and make way for dry ground.

Then God made lush vegetation and fruit trees with savory fruit grow on the rich soil. And God saw that it was good. This was the third day.

And God said, Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth. So the heavens filled with glorious light as sun, moon, and stars set their position. Streams of glory masked the entire sky with numerous stars and galaxies. This was the fourth day.

And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures”, so the expanse of the sea began to fill with beautiful and powerful swimming creatures. “Let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.” Then the multitudes of winged creatures appeared and soared with fervor in joyous freedom. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.” And there was evening, and there was morning-the fifth day.

And God said, “Let the land produce glorious living creatures according to their kinds”. Then every beast began to roam the land and feed on the lush landscape; magnificent livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and the mighty wild animals. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the many fish of the spacious sea and the birds of the open air, over the hardy livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. Enjoy!

And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground-everything that has the breath of life in it-I give every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning-the sixth day.

Thus the glorious heavens and earth were completed in their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his tremendous work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

DEVOTIONAL**Coyote Ugly²**

Encountering a coyote early one morning in Knoxville, TN, gave me a greater appreciation of the need for a sacred sanctuary. A short reflection on Psalm 96 v 6.

Psalm 96:6 Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary.

I saw my first coyote, very early, the other morning. It was beside the place where I like to fish. I had just put my fishing tackle back into the car, when I saw this thin looking, ugly dog cross the path. It was carrying the remains of a dead fish in its mouth and headed over to some rocks to chew awhile.

At first I thought it was an abandoned puppy. It was gaunt and thin, but as I watched it, I realized it had the wizened look of a fox. There was no bushy tail, so I counted that out. It was the eyes that made me realize this wasn't an abandoned pet. Dog's eyes are usually big and round; this animal's eyes were small and peering at me.

I tried to take a picture of the creature, but my camera was out of focus. When I got home, I looked up a few images of coyotes on the Internet. My suspicions were confirmed. It was a coyote – an ugly looking scavenger, if ever I saw one.

I guess my fishing hole must be part of the coyote's territory. With all of the development that is going on, its refuge must be constantly diminishing. The woods next to my fishing hole must be its sanctuary. Perhaps I'll get the chance to see it early one morning again. I hope so.

² <http://glenkirk.blogspot.com/2008/07/4-minute-devotions-coyote-ugly.html>

When we talk about sanctuaries in the church, we're usually referring to our churches. They have become the centers of our spiritual habitats, where we can feel safe and experience the presence of God's peace and love. As spiritual places and values begin to diminish around us, our havens of holiness become crucial to our relationship with Christ. In the midst of our troubles, worries, and anxieties, we need the church to be a solid foundation of hope, healing, and holiness for our lives.

So, today, let us give thanks to God for the churches where we engage in worship, experience fellowship, and enhance our discipleship. These sacred sanctuaries add so much to our hearts and spirits, helping us become better followers of Christ and servants of His Kingdom.

The connection

Just as we need our sanctuaries for a healthy spiritual life, the coyote as well as all other living things need their habitats to live healthy lives. Good habitat is not only the home of wildlife, it is their sanctuary. By increasing impacts upon natural areas by the over-consumptive choices we make, habitats become destroyed and create conditions which are many times too difficult to adapt to, and death becomes the outcome in many cases. Consuming less than we do will allow more natural habitats to stay healthy and allow wildlife to thrive. A thought to consider-What consumptive choices can you change?

See appendix for more devotionals.

II. ICE BREAKERS, GAMES, AND CHALLENGE ACTIVITIES

(time listed with each)

In a nutshell, ice breakers, games, and challenge activities help to give cohesiveness to a group. When people play and have fun together inhibitions are lessened and participants begin to relax and open up by sensing togetherness. Ice breakers help participants to warm up to each other, games are for creating fun, and challenge activities give a more task oriented strategy. For the challenge activities I've included a spiritual aspect by using a metaphor descriptor. An expansive list of ice breakers, games, and challenge activities can be found at www.wilderrdom.com.

Ice breakers and games

See appendix

Challenge activity

Human Knot³



Steps

1. Ask a group of 10-16 individuals to face one another in a tight circle.
2. Each person holds out his/her right hand and grasps the right hand of someone else, as if they were shaking hands.
3. Next each person extends his/her left hand and grasps the hand of someone else, so that each person is holding two different hands.
4. This hand-in-hand configuration should come out equal.
5. The group is to try to unwind themselves from their tangled situation so that after much try-this, try-that squirming and contorting, a hand-in-hand circle is formed.
6. The physical hand-to-hand contact that you have with your partner cannot be broken in order to facilitate an unwinding movement. Sweaty palms may pivot on one another, but skin contact may not be lost. As a result of the initial grasping movements, and depending upon the number of participants, two or even three distinct people circles may be torn.
7. These circles are sometimes intertwined like Ballantine rings. (circus hoops)

³ <http://ideanet.doe.state.in.us/ipla/hda/2002-0422.html>

8. If the group has been struggling with a “knot” for longer than your session has time, offer an honorable out called Knot First Aid. Indicate that actual hands and arms knots do sometimes materialize in this jumble of anatomical parts and that it may become necessary to effect a cure by deciding, amongst the group, which grip needs knot first aid; i.e., which pair of hands should be separated and regrip. 20 Minutes

Human Knot metaphor:

The Body of Christ is a community. It is healthy when joined together in love. At times this community can seem awkward because people don't always care for one another. Instead of reaching out to those who are near us, we can instead reach for those who are farther away because we prefer them instead. When we work together to keep our community strong we not only stay connected, we also help each other solve problems like creation stewardship.

See appendix for more challenge activities.

III. EXPLAINING WHAT WORSHIP IS: 2-3 minutes

Use information here as a reference to worship singing, not as a lecture script. If you can, talk about this as a single idea or platform from which the music is based. You might introduce this section by asking a question to engage your participants. You might ask a question like “How do you worship God outside of church?” or “How can your life be used as an instrument of worship?”

Worship is an integral part of developing an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. We need to develop a life of worship in which every aspect of our lives is the actual demonstration of worship. In a sense, life is worship because the outcome of our lives is an expression of what is happening on the inside. We are either in practice of worship or we are not. Imagine worship as related to offering. If you can imagine yourself lying in an offering plate giving yourself completely, you can offer all that you are in true devotion.

While music is not worship in itself, it is an enjoyable method in which to express our devotion and worship to God through the act of praise. We can worship just as all of creation worships their Creator. It says in Psalm 96:1:11-12, "Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth . . . Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy." Psalm 148:1-12 “Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD from the heavens. Praise him in the heights above. Praise him, all his angels; Praise him, all his heavenly hosts. Praise him, sun and moon; Praise him, all you shining stars. Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created. He set them in place forever and ever; he gave a

decree that will never pass away. Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, young men and maidens, old men and children.” The intent here is for everything to praise the Creator, everything.

IV. PRAISE MUSIC EXPLANATION: 20 minutes or more

Songs

Famous One

Who Is Like You

Indescribable

God Of Wonders

We Bow Down

For The Beauty Of The Earth

Resonate

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

This Is My Father’s World

Fairest Lord Jesus

Included are leader lyric and chord sheets, sheet music for hymns, participant song booklets, and a CD of original recorded music. The CD will acquaint the music leader with contemporary songs. The booklets should be copied for each number of participants. You have the freedom to use all the songs provided, use a portion of them, use your own

selections, or a combination of the two. Song lyrics should connect God and nature. Allow participants enough time to relax and enter into a time of worship by leading no less than 20 minutes of music. While practicing the music in preparation, sing through the songs as you would in real time. While doing this, time how long it takes to total 20 minutes so you can plan accordingly. 20 minutes adds up to about 5 or 6 songs, but you may have specific song arrangements which create a different amount of time. See the attached for music lyrics with chords, sheet music, and recorded music.

V. CARE OF CREATION INFORMATION: 5-10 minutes

Use information here as a reference to lessons, not as a lecture script. If you can, talk about this as a single idea or platform from which the program is based. Allow flexibility for engaging group discussion if the situation warrants it.

God's design of nature

God did not design nature haphazardly, but was thoughtful in his intentions. Psalm 96:1, 11-12a says "How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all." This is evident in all things we have examined in depth. For instance, a forest fire within a Lodge Pole pine forest will enable these trees to reproduce. As the fire becomes hot enough, the heat burns off the pitch from the cones. Then the bracts of the cone expand and open up to release its seeds. In fact, if a fire is not hot enough, these trees will not be able to reproduce. The fire must be very hot. When the seeds are disbursed, some of them are then able to become planted and grow into new trees. These trees then become habitat for wildlife like snowshoe hares and lynx. Ecological systems are designed to work in an orderly succession. The natural world recycles itself efficiently when left to work by natural

processes. Nature is capable of self-restoration within its capabilities. It has withstood and overcome tremendous pressures placed upon it.

Value of creation and our responsibility

Creation is a vulnerable planet which is devoid of an audible voice. Those of us who have an opportunity to speak up for the ecological systems around us must do so to promote preservation and stewardship of God's design. Prov. 31:8a "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves..." Though the trend in the Christian community often mirrors the rest of society, which tends to use natural resources at an accelerated rate, we are called to live a life that mirrors the beauty of God's character; to be holy and set apart from the habits of the world. Rom. 1-2a "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will." We tend to mirror the patterns of society as if goods were only valued for the financial price stamped upon them. But natural resources often do not truly reflect the actual cost of what their value is. There is not only a financial cost but an ecological cost as well. We have lost not only much sensitivity toward ecological pressures, we have lost sensitivity toward living in such a way that truly reflects a community that uses natural resource in a wise manner. Our lives must conform to reflect the values which allow ecological sustainability.

So how can we be transformed by the renewing of our mind for ecological purposes? God's word renews our mind so that our lives conform to patterns that are ecologically sound. In God's word we are taught to see the value of creation. God not only calls his creation good six times in Genesis 1: 4, 10, 12, 18, 25, and 31, he is excited about what he has made. "May the LORD rejoice in his works;" Psalm 104:31. God has designed a very beautiful and amazing place called earth, and he is willing to share his creation with us. He expects us to keep his creation intact and respect its beauty and value. We also need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds through understanding the natural workings of ecological systems. This stage of growth is not merely a simple or short term assignment; it is a lifelong season of exploration and discovery. God's creation is so magnificent, so amazing, let us grow in our understanding of ecological systems.

In Romans 1:20 we read "For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature— have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that they (godless, wicked, and suppressors of truth) are without excuse." Nature is a physical manifestation of God's attributes. It allows humanity to understand the significance of who God is. What are the consequences for destroying creation? What can we know about God if these elements are gone? We can no longer ignore preserving the environment to keep it healthy and thriving. We must act now.

If we still need convincing that there is tremendous value in creation other than for resource extraction, here is a scripture which needs to be closely examined. Col. 1:19-20 "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him (Jesus), and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace

through his blood, shed on the cross." God not only wants us to value his creation as something to be delighted in and protected, he wants to reconcile (restore/reunite) creation. Do you now see the true value of all that is living?

VI. TRAIL INFORMATION

If you are using a forest setting in a city area no trail information is needed. If however you are using a remote site you will need to refer to Trail tips in Training and Recommendations for the Field section.

VII. LESSONS EXPLAINED (the core): see individual lessons for time

See the attached for complete lessons of the following:

Getting to Know the Forest: Participants will be using a creative arts booklet to learn about the forest. Creative arts include writing a story, drawing a sound map, spending time studying birds, etc.

Generation Less: Participants will be exposed to media sources like video and internet to see how we live in an affluent society. Individual activities and interaction with others will allow participants to compare how simple items are produced, how others live without basic needs, and what things they can do to make positive changes.

It's a Matter of Survival: Participants will be shown how all living things need four elements to survive by using props, written information, and individual and group activities. Time will be provided for sharing and reflection.

You can choose to teach one, two, or three lessons during the program. Just make sure you choose a theme for the day that will compliment the lesson(s) as a whole.

Disclaimer-These lessons are to be done in such a way as to insure learners that God is to be worshiped and honored above his creation. This lesson is not worship of nature, but is an exploration into the value and responsibility for taking care of creation. Distinctly and intentionally speak to learners concerning this aspect to insure an accurate view of God and nature.

VIII. DO MORE GAMES OR CHALLENGE ACTIVITIES

Go to appendix or www.wilderdom for resources

XI. TRAIL INFORMATION

See Trail tips information in Training and Recommendations for the Field section if you are in a remote forest setting.

X. CLOSING CIRCLE

As the program is nearing its end, participants need to be regrouped in order to have focus and a sense of conclusion. Gather everyone in a circle around the altar. Let participants know what will be occurring for the rest of the program. You can do this by showing the white board again. Remind them again to think about their offering.

a. Poems and essays: 5-7 minutes

Untitled

All the cycles continue; seasons, days, water, nutrients, food chain, life, planetary rotation, light and dark, succession, rock activity... The cycles flow endlessly like a river

bent on moving. What a brilliant scheme. It's the ultimate design. We realize how unending the pattern is, but refuse to answer the logical question; "Can't you see God in the handiwork?" Maybe the image of God is too small for the minds of some. If there is a builder for every house, then there is a creator for the living world. As amazing as nature is, it is small potatoes compared to how amazing God is. Be amazed, be very, very amazed. The capabilities of God are so beyond what we can imagine or do. He is beyond the brilliance of nature. Yet he is not standoffish as his majesty might suggest. He waits in expectation for our attention. To move the winds in each direction is but a thought to him. To fill every facet and crevice with hues, established by a thought as light as a daydream. It is a simple pleasure to God. To make so many exotic landscapes, each with their own internal mechanisms to enable reproduction, in distinct individual ways, God shows his love. To spin the universe in planetary rotation by the mere wave of his hand; it is nothing more than a subtle effort to God. To give natural catastrophes the ability to begin, and the succession of repair to earth afforded by time, it is his play. He designed a planet for beauty, fierceness, roughness, and calm. How can we not see God in the design?

See appendix for more poems and essays

b. Lead second praise sing: 10 minutes or more if you sense the need

Use songs from previous list or songs of your own choosing.

c. Ask what the group has gotten out of the day: 10 minutes but will vary with group size

Asking for what has been significant or memorable from the day helps to reinforce learning. You may want to ask "What gifts has God given you this day?"

d. Pledge: 5 minutes

The pledge included with this program is a tangible item for getting a commitment from participants, that they will make a committed effort for change. People are more willing to demonstrate a real change in their lives when they sign something as opposed to a verbal promise. The pledge included can be used or you can write one of your own. Copy the pledge and cut pages in half. You might want to make nice copies for handing out. When it is time in the schedule for the pledge, tell participants to listen as you read it to them because they will have an opportunity to sign the pledge afterward. Ask participants if they are willing to sign and date it. Let them know you will keep their pledge and then will send it back to them in about 1 – 2 weeks so that they will be reminded. Collect their pledges and keep until sending.

e. Offerings: 1-2 minutes for each participant

Offerings are elements which each participant gives as a gift. Offerings can be given to the place, shared with the group, given to an individual, placed on the altar, said to God, etc. They should be expressed openly with the group. Each element, as well as the way in which the offering is given is determined solely by the participant.

Offerings are representative of a gift given. Offerings are symbols which represent the experience of the day, not a monetary collection. As a few suggestions they can be a hope, enlightenment or revelation a participant receives during the program, a sung verse, a short story, a quote, a said prayer, an object, a promise, an act of kindness, or a suggested change of lifestyle for self. However, any simple creative gift can be given as an offering. The focus should be centered on giving, not centered on self or imposing challenges on

others. The key is simplicity. Emphasize to participants that a simple gift from the heart is best, and that worry over the offering truly defeats the purpose.

f. Benedictions, blessings, and prayers: 1-5 minutes

Benediction⁴

Almighty and gracious Father, we give you thanks for the fruits of the earth in their season and for the labors of those who harvest them. Make us, we pray, faithful stewards of your great bounty, for the provision of our necessities and the relief of all who are in need, to the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen*

Blessing⁵

May our eyes be blessed that we may see God's beauty in the star-swept sky;

may our ears be blessed that we may hear God calling us in the wind;

⁴ Episcopal Province of New England with assistance from Sustainable Step New England

⁵ <http://www.appleseeds.org/newdawn.htm>

may our hearts be blessed that we may feel the love of
God in the warmth of the sun.

May God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, bless us with each life-renewing breath we
take!

Go in peace to serve the God of Earth and sky!

Prayer

Dawn of New Beginnings⁶

We thank you for this earth, our home; for the wide sky and the blessed sun, for the
ocean and streams, for the towering hills and the whispering wind, for the trees and green
grass.

We thank you for our senses by which we hear the songs of birds, and see the
splendor of fields of golden wheat, and taste autumn's fruit, rejoice in the feel of snow, and
smell the breath of spring flowers.

Grant us a heart opened wide to all this beauty; and save us from being so blind that
we pass unseeing when even the common thorn bush is aflame with your glory.

For each new dawn is filled with infinite possibilities for new beginnings and new
discoveries. Life is constantly changing and renewing itself. In this new day of new
beginnings with God, all things are possible. We are restored and renewed in a joyous

⁶ <http://www.appleseeds.org/newdawn.htm>

awakening to the wonder that our lives are and, yet, can be.

Amen.

See appendix for more benedictions, blessings, and prayers.

Famous One

Chris Tomlin / Jesse Reeves

©2002 worshiptogether.com Songs / Sixsteps Music

Chorus

G C
You are the Lord the famous One, famous One
Em D C
Great is your name in all the earth
G C
The heavens declare You're glorious, glorious
Em D G
Great is Your fame beyond the earth

Verse 1

C G
And for all You've done and yet to do,
C G
with every breath I'm praising You
Am Em
Desire of nations and every heart.
C D
You alone are God, You alone are God

Verse 2

C G
The morning star is shining through
C G
and every eye is watching You
Am Em
Revealed by nature and miracles
C D
You are beautiful, beautiful

Indescribable

Chris Tomlin

©Sparrow Records / Sixsteps Music

Verse 1

Em Dsus/F#
 From the highest of heights to the depths of
 G G2 Am F
 the sea Creation's revealing Your majesty
 Em Dsus/F#
 From the colors of fall to the fragrance
 G G2 Am
 of spring, every creature unique in the song
 F C2 D2
 that it sings. All exclaiming

Chorus 1

G Dsus
 Indescribable, uncontainable,
 C2
 You placed the stars in the sky and You
 Em
 know them by name
 G/B C2
 You are amazing God.
 G Dsus
 All powerful, untameable,
 C2
 awestruck we fall to our knees as we
 Em G C2
 humbly proclaim You are amazing God

Verse 2

Em
 Who has told every lightning bolt
 Dsus/F# G G2
 where it should go?
 Am
 Or seen heavenly storehouses
 Am7/G F
 laden with snow?
 Em
 Who imagined the sun and gives
 Dsus/F# G G2
 source to its light?
 Am
 Yet conceals it to bring us the
 Am7/G F C2 D2
 coolness of night? None can fathom

Bridge Am Am7/G F

Chorus 2

G Dsus
 Indescribable, uncontainable,
 C2
 You placed the stars in the sky and You
 Em G/B C2
 know them by name. You are amazing God.
 G Dsus
 Incomparable, unchangeable,
 C2
 You see the depths of my heart and You
 Em G/B C2
 love me the same. You are amazing God.

You are amazing God

Resonate

Jason Ingram / Rick Heil / Tamara Alan

©2001 INO Music / Magnificat Music / Heil Music / Dayspring Music, Inc.

Verse 1

Bm Asus Em7
 Let the sea resound, let every knee bow down. We will praise You, we will praise You
 Bm Asus Em7 BmDE
 Let every tongue confess of Your righteousness. We will praise You, we will praise You

Chorus

D2 Dmaj9 D2 Dmaj9 G2
 Let all nature sing; let the earth rejoice. We will resonate, resonate Your glory
 D2 Dmaj9 D2 Dmaj9 G2 D2
 Let all living things praise You with one voice. We will resonate, resonate Your glory

Verse 2

Bm Asus Em7
 Let the mountains ring with praises to our King. We will worship! We will worship!
 Bm Asus Em7 G2
 Let the skies proclaim what Your hands have made. We will worship You!

Verse 3

Bm Asus Em7
 Let the rocks cry out, let the children shout. We will worship! We will worship!
 Bm Asus Em7 G2
 Let the waters roar; praise You forevermore. We will worship You!

Bridge

Bm A F#7 Bm A G2
 Let songs of joy fill the air. Your praises echo everywhere
 D/F#m G2 A Em7 Bm
 From oceans deep, to the sky let all things praise You Lord Most High!

We Bow Down

Words and Music by Twila Paris

©1983 Singspiration Music

Verse 1

G D G Dsus D
 You are Lord of creation and Lord of my life. Lord of the land and the sea
 G D Em Em7 D G
 You were Lord of the heavens before there was time. Lord of all lords you will be

Chorus

G D G (Em on 3rd time)
 We bow down and we worship You Lord (3x)
 Em7 D G
 Lord of all lords You will be

Verse 2

G D G Dsus D
 You are King of creation and King of my life. King of the land and the sea
 G D Em Em7 D G
 You were King of the heavens before there was time. King of all kings you will be

Who Is Like You

Adapted from Psalm 89 by Craig Finley

Verse 1

G C G C G D C D
 Who is like You oh Lord, painter of the skies, maker of the seas
 G C G C G D
 Who is like You oh Lord, Savior of a sinner like me

Chorus

 Em C Em C
 When I was alone You came. When I cried out You called my name
 Em C D
 When I was lost You came and rescued me

Verse 2

G C G C G D C D
 Who is like You oh Lord, breath of life, Savior of men
 G C G C G D
 Who is like You oh Lord. I long for Your coming again

Bridge

C G D C G D
 Oh Lord, how rich the grace, how strong and free, oh Lord that covers me

God of Wonders

Marc Byrd / Steve Hindalong

©2000 New Spring Publishing, Inc. / Storm Boy Music / Meatux Mercy

Verse 1

Esus F#m D Esus F#m D Esus
 Lord of all creation, of water, earth, and sky
 F#m D Esus F#m D
 The heavens are your tabernacle. Glory to the Lord on high

Chorus 1

A Esus Bm D
 God of wonders beyond our galaxy You are holy, holy
 A Esus Bm D
 The universe declares Your majesty. You are holy, holy
 D Eadd9
 Lord of heaven and earth

Verse 2

Esus F#m D Esus F#m D Esus
 Early in the morning I will celebrate the light
 F#m D Esus F#m D
 And when I stumble in the darkness I will call Your name by night

Bridge

Bm D E Bm last-A
 Hallelujah to the Lord of heaven and earth (3x)

Chorus 2

A Esus Bm D
 God of wonders beyond our galaxy You are holy, holy
 A Esus Bm D
 Precious Lord reveal Your heart to me. Father hold me, hold me
 D Eadd9 D Eadd9 Esus
 Lord of heaven and earth. Lord of heaven and earth

For the Beauty of the Earth

Folliott S. Pierpoint, 1835-1917, alt

- | | | | | | | | |
|---------|--------------------------------------|---------|--------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------|--------|
| 1. | A | D | A | D | A | E | A |
| | For the beauty | of the | earth, | For the glory of the | skies, | | |
| | For the love which from our birth | | | Over | and around us lies, | | |
| | A | D | A | D | A | E | A |
| 2. | For the beauty | of each | hour | Of the | day and | of the | night, |
| | Hill and vale, and tree and flower | | | Sun and moon, and stars of light, | | | |
| | A | D | A | D | A | E | A |
| 3. | For the joy of ear and eye, | | | For the heart and mind's | delight | | |
| | For the Mystic | harmony | | Linking sense to | sound and sight, | | |
| | A | D | A | D | A | E | A |
| 4. | For the joy of | human | love, | Brother, sister, parent, | child, | | |
| | Friends on earth, and friends above, | | | For all | gentle thoughts and mild, | | |
| | A | D | A | D | A | E | A |
| 5. | For each perfect gift of thine | | | Unto | us so | freely | given, |
| | Graces, human and | divine, | | Flowers of earth and buds of heaven, | | | |
| | A | D | A | D | A | E | A |
| 6. | For Thy church, that ever | more | | Lifteth | holy hand above, | | |
| | Offering up on | every | shore | Her pure sacrifice of love, | | | |
| | A | E | A | D | F#m | E | A |
| Chorus: | Lord of all to Thee we raise | | | This our hymn of grateful praise | | | |

This is My Father's world

Malibie D. Babcock, 1858-1901, alt

Adapted by Franklin L. Shepphard, 1852-1930

Verse 1

E B E A E B
 This is my father's world; And to my listening ears,
 E C#m G#m C#m A B E
 All nature sings, and 'round me rings The music of the spheres
 E A E A F#m B
 This is my Father's world; I rest me in the thought
 E C#m F#m C#m A B E
 Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas, His hand the wonders wrought

Verse 2

E B E A E B
 This is my Father's world; The birds their carols raise,
 E C#m G#m C#m A B E
 The morning light, the lily white, Declare their Maker's praise
 E A E A F#m B
 This is my Father's world; He shines in all that's fair;
 E C#m F#m C#m A B E F verse 3 transition
 In the rustling grass I hear Him pass; He speaks to me everywhere

Verse 3

 C F A# F C
 This is my Father's world; Oh let me ne'er forget
 F Dm Am Dm A# B# F
 That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet
 C F A# F A# G C
 This is my Father's world; Why should my heart be sad?
 F Dm Am Dm A# C F
 The Lord is King; let the heavens ring. God reigns; let the earth be glad

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Henry van Dyke, 1852-1933

Arr. from Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770-1827

Verse 1

G D
 Joyful, joyful we adore Thee,
 G D
 God of glory, Lord of love
 G G7 C
 Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,
 G D G
 Opening to the sun above
 D G D G
 Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
 D Em C D D7
 Drive the dark of doubt away;
 G C
 Giver of immortal gladness,
 G D D7 G
 Fill us with the light of day.

Verse 2

G D
 All Thy works with joy surround thee,
 G D
 Earth and heav'n reflect thy rays
 G G7 C
 Stars and angels sing around thee,
 G D G
 Center of unbroken praise
 D G D G
 Field and forest, vale and mountain,
 D Em C D D7
 Flowr'y meadow, flashing sea,
 G G7 C
 Chanting bird and flowing fountain,
 G D D7 G
 Call us to rejoice in thee

Verse 3

G D
 Thou art giving and forgiving,
 G D
 Ever blessing, ever blest,
 G G7 C
 Well-spring of the joy of living,
 G D G
 Ocean depth of happy rest!
 D G D G
 Thou the Father, Christ our brother,
 D Em C D D7
 All who live in love are thine;
 G C
 Teach us how to love each other,
 G D D7 G
 Lift us to the joy divine

Verse 4

G D
 Mortals, join the happy chorus
 G D
 Which the morning stars began;
 G G7 C
 Father love is reigning o'er us,
 G D G
 Brother love binds man to man.
 D G D G
 Ever singing, march we onward,
 D Em C D D7
 Victors in the midst of strife,
 G G7 C
 Joyful music leads us sun-ward
 G D D7 G
 In the triumph song of life

Fairest Lord Jesus

Munster Gesnagbuch

Verse 1

G Em D G Em D G
 Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature,
 C G Em Am Em D
 O thou of God and man the Son,
 G Em Am D C G
 Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honor,
 C G D G
 Thou my soul's glory, joy, and crown

Verse 2

G Em D G
 Fair are the meadows,
 Em D G
 Fairer still the woodlands,
 C G Em Am Em D
 Robed in the blooming garb of spring:
 G Em Am D C G
 Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,
 C G D G
 Who makes the woeful heart to sing

Verse 3

G Em D G
 Fair is the sunshine,
 Em D G
 Fairer still the moonlight,
 C G Em Am Em D
 And all the twinkling, starry host:
 G Em Am
 Jesus shines brighter,
 D C G
 Jesus shines purer,
 C G D G
 Than all the angels heaven can boast
D-verse 4 transition: 2 counts

Verse 4

A F#m E A A F#m E A
 Beautiful Savior! Lord of the nations!
 D A F#m Bm F#m E
 Son of God and Son of Man
 A F#m Bm E A
 Glory and honor, praise adoration
 D A E F#m
 Now and forevermore be Thine
 A D A E A
 Now and forevermore be Thine

All Creatures of Our God and King

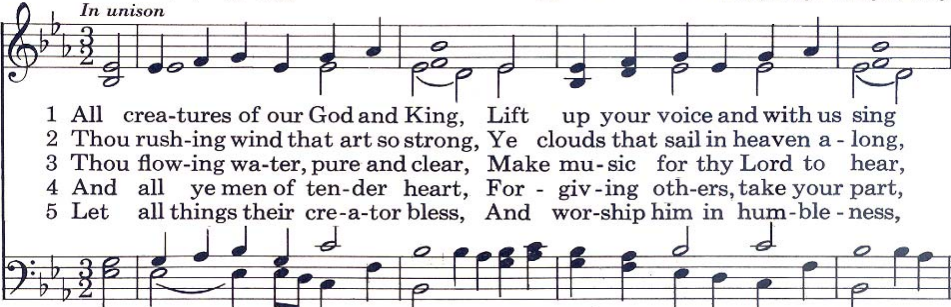
St. Francis of Assisi, 1182-1226

Tr. William H. Draper, 1855-1933

LASST UNS ERFREUEN 8.8.4.4.8.8. with Alleluias

Melody from "Geistliche Kirchengesäng," Cologne, 1623

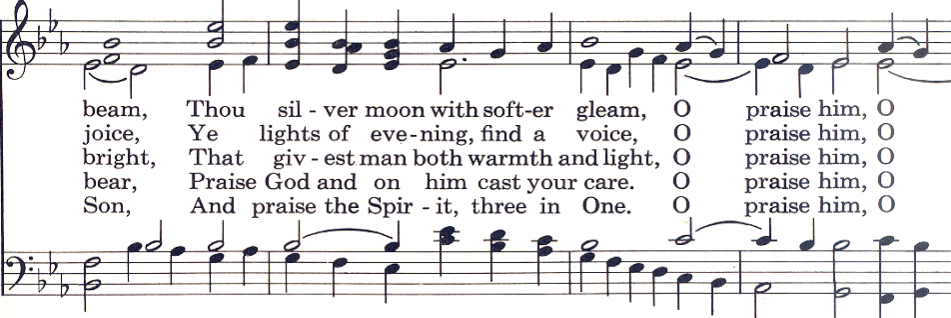
In unison



1 All crea-tures of our God and King, Lift up your voice and with us sing
 2 Thou rush-ing wind that art so strong, Ye clouds that sail in heaven a - long,
 3 Thou flow-ing wa-ter, pure and clear, Make mu-sic for thy Lord to hear,
 4 And all ye men of ten-der heart, For - giv-ing oth-ers, take your part,
 5 Let all things their cre-a-tor bless, And wor-ship him in hum-ble - ness,



Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia! Thou burn-ing sun with gold-en
 O praise him, Al-le-lu-ia! Thou ris-ing morn, in praise re -
 Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia! Thou fire so mas-ter-ful and
 O sing ye, Al-le-lu-ia! Ye who long pain and sor-row
 O praise him, Al-le-lu-ia! Praise, praise the Fa-ther, praise the



beam, Thou sil-ver moon with soft-er gleam, O praise him, O
 joice, Ye lights of eve-ning, find a voice, O praise him, O
 bright, That giv-est man both warmth and light, O praise him, O
 bear, Praise God and on him cast your care. O praise him, O
 Son, And praise the Spir-it, three in One. O praise him, O



praise him, Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia! A-men.

A lower setting may be found at No. 30

WORKS IN CREATION

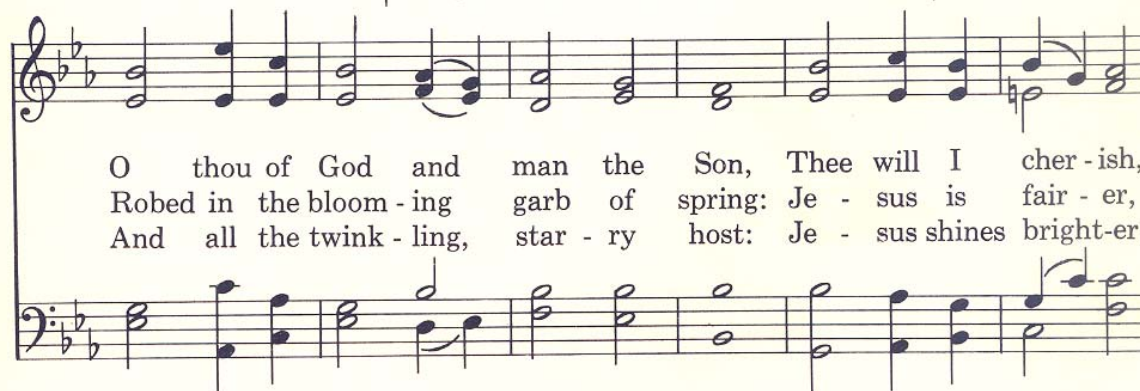
Fairest Lord Jesus

German: 17th century

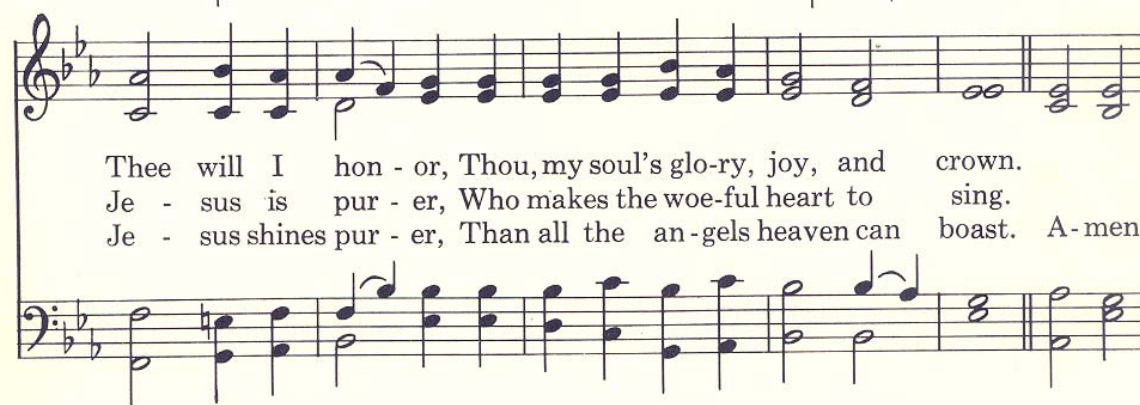
SCHÖNSTER HERR JESU 5.6.8.5.5.8.
Silesian Melody



1 Fair - est Lord Je - sus, Rul - er of all na - ture,
2 Fair are the mead - ows, Fair - er still the wood - lands,
3 Fair is the sun - shine, Fair - er still the moon - light,



O thou of God and man the Son, Thee will I cher - ish,
Robed in the bloom - ing garb of spring: Je - sus is fair - er,
And all the twink - ling, star - ry host: Je - sus shines bright - er,



Thee will I hon - or, Thou, my soul's glo - ry, joy, and crown.
Je - sus is pur - er, Who makes the woe - ful heart to sing.
Je - sus shines pur - er, Than all the an - gels heaven can boast. A - men.

CHARACTER AND GLORY

This Is My Father's World

Maltbie D. Babcock, 1858-1901, alt.

TERRA BEATA S.M.D.

Traditional English Melody

Adapted by Franklin L. Sheppard, 1852-1930

In unison

1 This is my Fa-ther's world; And to my lis-tening ears, All
 2 This is my Fa-ther's world; The birds their car - ols raise, The
 3 This is my Fa-ther's world; Oh, let me ne'er for - get That

na - ture sings, and round me rings The mu - sic of the spheres.
 morn - ing light, the lil - y white, De - clare their Mak - er's praise.
 though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the rul - er yet.

This is my Fa-ther's world; I rest me in the thought Of
 This is my Fa-ther's world; He shines in all that's fair; In the
 This is my Fa-ther's world; Why should my heart be sad? The

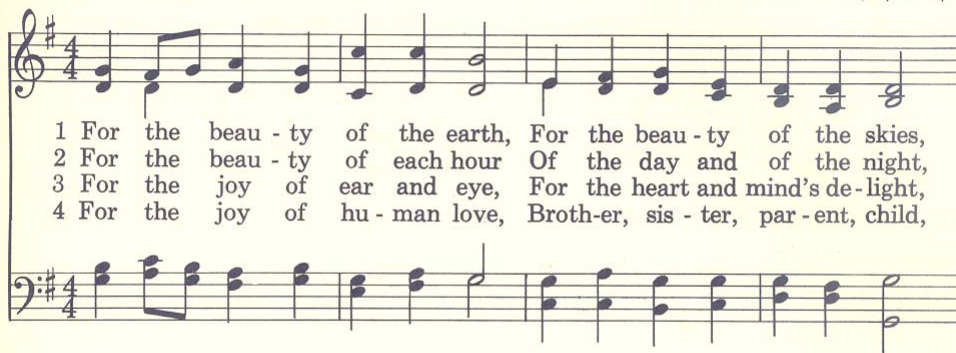
rocks and trees, of skies and seas, His hand the won - ders wrought.
 rus - tling grass I hear him pass; He speaks to me ev - ery - where.
 Lord is king; let the heav - ens ring. God reigns; let the earth be glad.

CHILDREN

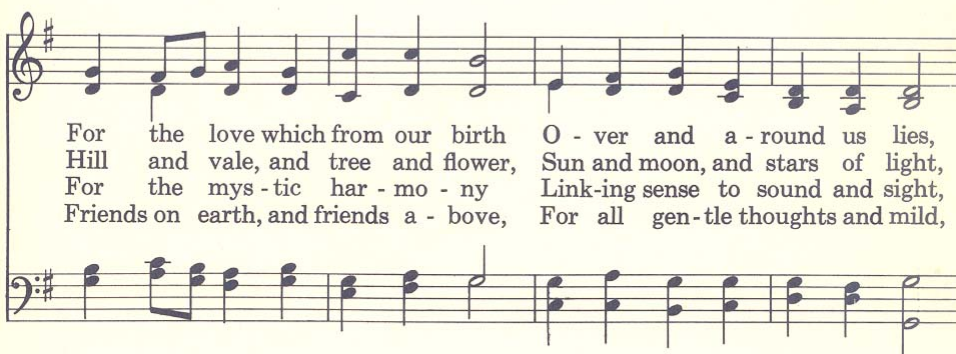
For the Beauty of the Earth

Folliott S. Pierpoint, 1835-1917, alt.

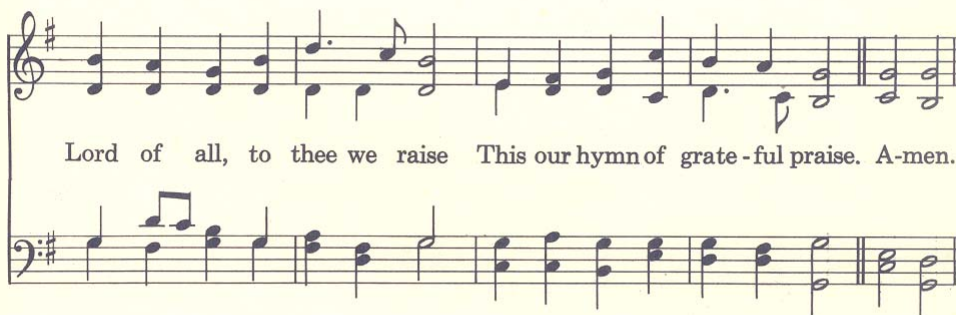
DIX 7.7.7.7.7.
Abridged from a chorale by
Conrad Kocher, 1786-1872



1 For the beau - ty of the earth, For the beau - ty of the skies,
2 For the beau - ty of each hour Of the day and of the night,
3 For the joy of ear and eye, For the heart and mind's de-light,
4 For the joy of hu - man love, Broth-er, sis - ter, par - ent, child,



For the love which from our birth O - ver and a - round us lies,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower, Sun and moon, and stars of light,
For the mys - tic har - mo - ny Link-ing sense to sound and sight,
Friends on earth, and friends a - bove, For all gen - tle thoughts and mild,



Lord of all, to thee we raise This our hymn of grate - ful praise. A-men.

5 For each perfect gift of thine
Unto us so freely given,
Graces, human and divine,
Flowers of earth and buds of heaven,

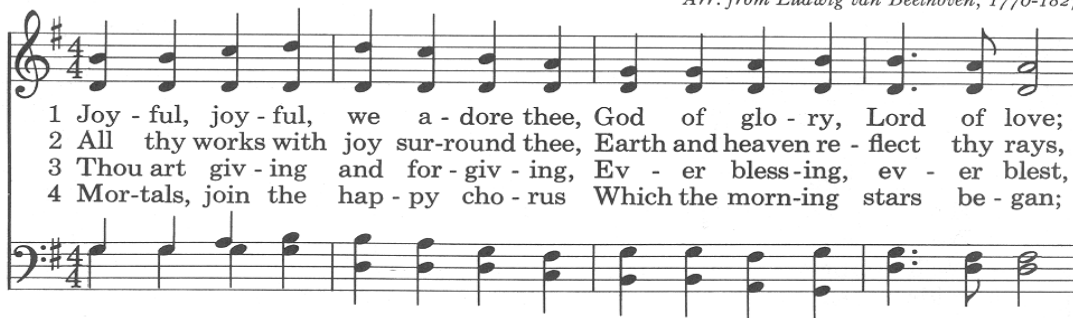
6 For thy Church that evermore
Lifteth holy hands above,
Offering up on every shore
Her pure sacrifice of love,

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

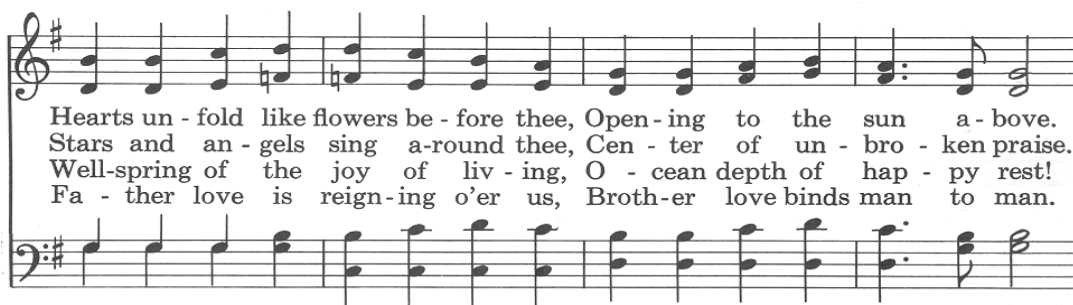
Henry van Dyke, 1852-1933

HYMN TO JOY 8.7.8.7.D.

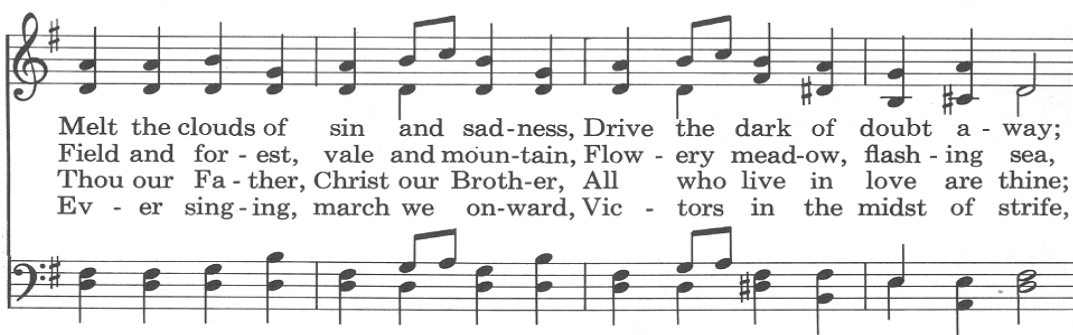
Arr. from Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770-1827



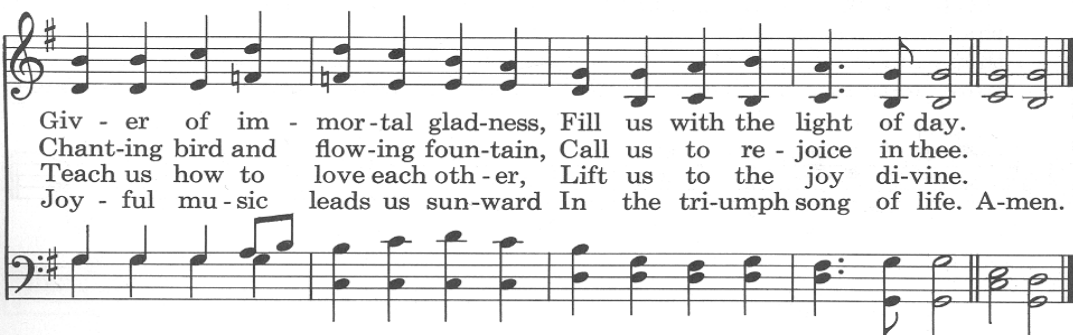
1 Joy - ful, joy - ful, we a - dore thee, God of glo - ry, Lord of love;
 2 All thy works with joy sur-round thee, Earth and heaven re - flect thy rays,
 3 Thou art giv - ing and for - giv - ing, Ev - er bless - ing, ev - er blest,
 4 Mor-tals, join the hap - py cho - rus Which the morn - ing stars be - gan;



Hearts un - fold like flowers be - fore thee, Open - ing to the sun a - bove.
 Stars and an - gels sing a-round thee, Cen - ter of un - bro - ken praise.
 Well-spring of the joy of liv - ing, O - cean depth of hap - py rest!
 Fa - ther love is reign - ing o'er us, Broth - er love binds man to man.



Melt the clouds of sin and sad-ness, Drive the dark of doubt a - way;
 Field and for - est, vale and moun-tain, Flow - ery mead-ow, flash - ing sea,
 Thou our Fa - ther, Christ our Broth - er, All who live in love are thine;
 Ev - er sing - ing, march we on - ward, Vic - tors in the midst of strife,



Giv - er of im - mor-tal glad-ness, Fill us with the light of day.
 Chant-ing bird and flow-ing foun-tain, Call us to re - joice in thee.
 Teach us how to love each oth - er, Lift us to the joy di-vine.
 Joy - ful mu - sic leads us sun-ward In the tri-umph song of life. A-men.

ADORATION AND PRAISE

BASIC TRAINING AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FIELD

SCRIPTURE

A wonderful source has recently entered the book market. The Green Bible, so called as it is a *green letter edition*, has made finding applicable scriptures as easy as flipping through pages of the bible. All verses which are related to creation, wildlife, tending the garden (stewardship), etc. are printed in green. It is recommended that you have this source on hand for quick reference when you are writing lesson plans and the like. No longer will the average lay person be searching for verses, not knowing where to start. Having The Green bible on hand will give you a tremendous head start when looking for verses to use in your material. The Green Bible can be found at HarperCollins Publishers, www.greenletterbible.com, or you can order it from your local bible or Christian bookstore, or find it on web-stores like amazon.com.

WRITING CURRICULUM

Use one of the lessons included with this project as an outline for structuring lessons of your own. Adapt one to fit your own subject or application. The main points you need to consider are audience, duration of lesson, goals for the teacher, objectives for participants, materials, and doing the activity.

Goals and objectives

Goals are for the teacher (what you can accomplish with participants), while objectives are intended for evaluating what you hope your participants can demonstrate. You want to see evidence that your objectives are being met. If a general goal is not measurable it

may still be a goal, but you will not understand if your point is getting across to the participant. I consider these kinds of goals to be a “hope”, not necessarily obtainable. Making objectives measurable helps when trying to evaluate your work and what progress is being made. Something to consider is to find help from someone that can be an objective reader for what you’ve written. This is how blind spots can be revealed which you may be unaware of.

You also want to keep in mind a main theme and creative approach. Writing specific goals and objectives will allow for this.

Example of a goal:

This lesson will expose learners to how much production goes into producing goods.

Example of an objective:

The participants will share a story of those who do without the basic necessities of life.

See lessons included with this project for more examples. The approach of environmental education is that learning should be engaging. Find a way to keep the main theme throughout as well as keeping participants interested. For an adult audience, participants can come and go at will, so most people will only stay if their interest is kept.

Knowing your audience

There are qualities/dimensions of the learning process you may want to study. This will allow you to know your learners better.

Learning styles

My suggestion is that you consider this aspect of learning by using a variety of teaching strategies to accommodate a variety of learners.

What are learning styles? Learning styles are simply different approaches or ways of learning.

What are the types of learning styles?¹

Visual Learners

These learners need to see the teacher's body language and facial expression to fully understand the content of a lesson. They tend to prefer sitting at the front of the classroom to avoid visual obstructions (e.g. people's heads). They may think in pictures and learn best from visual displays including: diagrams, illustrated text books, overhead transparencies, videos, flipcharts and hand-outs. During a lecture or classroom discussion, visual learners often prefer to take detailed notes to absorb the information.

Auditory Learners

They learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say. Auditory learners interpret the underlying meanings of speech through listening to tone of voice, pitch, speed and other nuances. Written information may have little meaning until it is heard. These learners often benefit from reading text aloud and using a tape recorder.

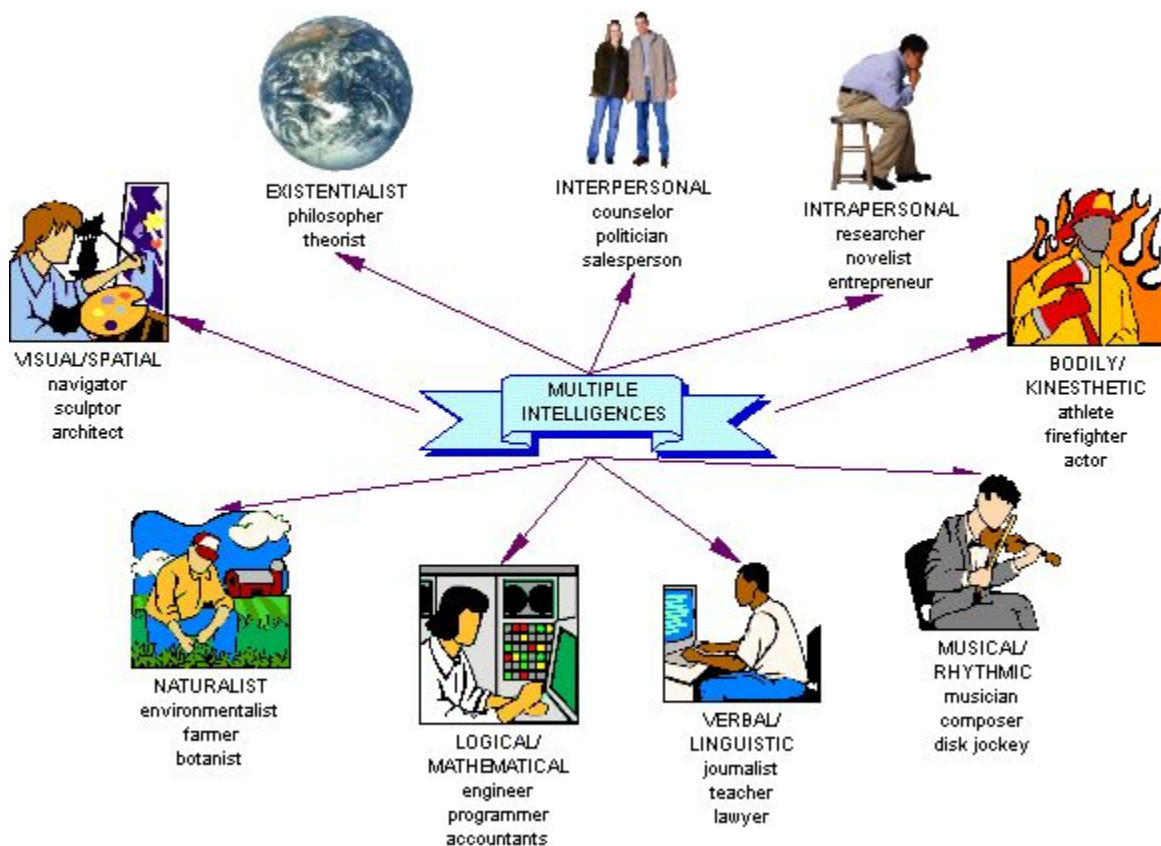
¹ <http://www.ldpride.net/learningstyles.MI.htm#What%20are>

Tactile/Kinesthetic Learners

Tactile/Kinesthetic persons learn best through a hands-on approach, actively exploring the physical world around them. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration.

Multiple Intelligences

Another area that may be helpful when using teaching strategy is in understanding Multiple Intelligences. What is Multiple Intelligence?² Conceived by Howard Gardner, Multiple Intelligences are seven different ways to demonstrate intellectual ability.



3

² <http://www.ldpride.net/learningstyles.MI.htm#Multiple%20Intelligences%20Explained>

³ http://naungancinta.files.wordpress.com/2008/04/multiple_intelligences_diagram.jpg

What are the types of Multiple Intelligence?

Visual/Spatial Intelligence

Ability to perceive the visual: These learners tend to think in pictures and need to create vivid mental images to retain information. They enjoy looking at maps, charts, pictures, videos, and movies.

Their skills include:

puzzle building, reading, writing, understanding charts and graphs, a good sense of direction, sketching, painting, creating visual metaphors and analogies (perhaps through the visual arts), manipulating images, constructing, fixing, designing practical objects, interpreting visual images.

Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence

Ability to use words and language: These learners have highly developed auditory skills and are generally elegant speakers. They think in words rather than pictures.

Their skills include:

listening, speaking, writing, storytelling, explaining, teaching, using humor, understanding the syntax and meaning of words, remembering information, convincing someone of their point of view, analyzing language usage.

Logical/Mathematical Intelligence

Ability to use reason, logic and numbers. These learners think conceptually in logical and numerical patterns making connections between pieces of information. Always curious about the world around them, these learner ask lots of questions and like to do experiments.

Their skills include:

problem solving, classifying and categorizing information, working with abstract concepts to figure out the relationship of each to the other, handling long chains of reason to make local progressions, doing controlled experiments, questioning and wondering about natural events, performing complex mathematical calculations, working with geometric shapes.

Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence

Ability to control body movements and handle objects skillfully. These learners express themselves through movement. They have a good sense of balance and eye-hand co-ordination. (e.g. ball play, balancing beams). Through interacting with the space around them, they are able to remember and process information.

Their skills include:

dancing, physical co-ordination, sports, hands on experimentation, using body language, crafts, acting, miming, using their hands to create or build, expressing emotions through the body.

Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence

Ability to produce and appreciate music. These musically inclined learners think in sounds, rhythms and patterns. They immediately respond to music either appreciating or criticizing what they hear. Many of these learners are extremely sensitive to environmental sounds (e.g. crickets, bells, dripping taps).

Their skills include:

singing, whistling, playing musical instruments, recognizing tonal patterns, composing music, remembering melodies, understanding the structure and rhythm of music.

Interpersonal Intelligence

Ability to relate and understand others. These learners try to see things from other people's point of view in order to understand how they think and feel. They often have an uncanny ability to sense feelings, intentions and motivations. They are great organizers, although they sometimes resort to manipulation. Generally they try to maintain peace in group settings and encourage co-operation. They use both verbal (e.g. speaking) and non-verbal language (e.g. eye contact, body language) to open communication channels with others.

Their skills include:

seeing things from other perspectives (dual-perspective), listening, using empathy, understanding other people's moods and feelings, counseling, co-operating with groups, noticing people's moods, motivations and intentions, communicating both verbally and non-verbally, building trust, peaceful conflict resolution, establishing positive relations with other people.

Intrapersonal Intelligence

Ability to self-reflect and be aware of one's inner state of being. These learners try to understand their inner feelings, dreams, relationships with others, and strengths and weaknesses.

Their Skills include:

Recognizing their own strengths and weaknesses, reflecting and analyzing themselves, awareness of their inner feelings, desires and dreams, evaluating their thinking patterns, reasoning with themselves, understanding their role in relationship to others.

Teaching style

Awareness of your teaching style is another way to gain direction in how you present a lesson or program. Your teaching style is as unique as you are. There is no one way to teach well. Developing your own true teaching style is developed over time and with practice. So simply practice.

Below are twenty-two values that might be displayed in various ways in a teaching situation. In your ideal teaching process, how would you rank them? Place a 1 next to the quality you value most in your teaching, a 2 next to the second, and so on through 22 which will represent the quality you value least.⁴

_____ Freedom

_____ Passivity

_____ Rigidity

_____ Concentration

_____ Self-direction

_____ Fear

_____ Disorder

_____ Purposefulness

_____ Dogmatism

_____ Alienation

_____ Orderliness

_____ Respect

_____ Favoritism

_____ Privacy

_____ Creativity

_____ Equality

_____ Quiet

_____ Dominance

_____ Chaos

_____ Fairness

_____ Laughter

_____ Love

⁴ Adapted from Curwin and Fuhrman, *Discovering Your Teaching Self* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970.)

Grappling with stage fright

If you are daunted by fear or nervousness during presentations here are some things that may help. Most of the time stage fright begins because we are too aware of ourselves. We focus on thoughts of how many people are looking at us. Replace it with focusing on how important the message is. After all, if the message is important enough for us to be saying it, then it should be the focal point, not how we look to others. That's the question to ask yourself; "Is this message important for people to hear?" and if it is, that should be where your focus lies. Repetition also helps to give you confidence because you will know the material more thoroughly. Practice your material and then teach a friend that can video tape your lesson. Review the tape and get feedback from your friend. Ask what they learned from the lesson and was any part of the lesson unclear. Ask for suggestions and make adjustments accordingly.

Trail tips: In case you use a remote site

If you are conducting your program in a city forest area you will most likely not need to know trail ethics, but if you are using a wilderness setting these tips will apply to your situation.

Being prepared

Most of us never consider the possibility of getting lost while hiking. It is very possible as I have experienced in the real world. It is highly recommended by the hiking community to make sure every precaution has been taken to ensure a safe trip on the trail. The number one precaution for those who venture out onto trails is to take the ten essentials with you:

The ten essentials

- matches
- fire starter (such as a candle)
- knife
- extra food and water
- extra warm clothing
- rain gear
- sunscreen, sunglasses, and sun hat
- flashlight and extra batteries
- first aid kit
- map and compass (make sure you know how to use them).⁵

These bare necessities can keep everyone alive if you've gotten lost while on a hike.

It is also advisable that you are physically capable beyond what your activity requires. If you take learners out on a trail, make sure you can do not only those hills, but have breath and stamina to spare. Also keep an eye on everyone who is hiking with you. Make sure everyone has a chance to rest at regular intervals. The idea is to lead and sweep so no one is forgotten or left behind.

Warm up

Hiking on trails, like other exercise should begin with a few stretches. It is very easy to think that we are prepared for a hike when we are active, but muscles can shrink back after

⁵ Fleming, J., Staying Found: The Complete Map & Compass Handbook

we've rested them. Stretching helps to warm up cold muscles and promotes flexibility. This in turn allows muscles to hurt less overall and heal more quickly.

Minimal impact

We can view wild space as if it is someone's home. Vegetation houses within it many living things. It is someone's home. Traveling off trail can be not only a good way to become lost, it can create unnecessary impacts from the weight of your body. We tend to move in a haphazard manner when traveling, tearing up vegetation, creating erosion, crushing those things which are vulnerable under our feet. It is recommended that you and your learners stay on established trails. You also want to remind learners that staying on trails is an unspoken courtesy for the established authority which manages the trails where you hike. Show courtesy by not deviating from established trail-ways.

Waste disposal

A tidy little subject, ain't it? We all should be aware of the importance of the disposal of excrement. If you're thinking this subject is too crude to explore, get real. Consider that even God has a word for us, "Designate a place outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself. As part of your equipment have something to dig with, and when you relieve yourself, dig a hole and cover up your excrement." Deut 23:12-13. Now, for the hands-on of this delicate subject.

The main idea in waste disposal is to protect waterways and wildlife from our feces. Digging a hole should measure 150 feet from any source of water and reach six to eight inches in depth.⁶ Better yet, find a stick which can be used as a tool to spread the waste along the wall of the hole. The process of breaking down the material will happen at a much quicker rate. But there's more. It's also imperative that toilet paper be packed out. It doesn't break down quickly and can be an attention grabber for animals.

Then, just when you think you're done there's more. Along these lines, the question of what to do when our bladder is full, is on our minds. If it is possible to water a tree or rock, do it. This will hinder salt seeking critters from digging up our watering holes which causes erosion.

Medical training

If you teach in a in the field it is highly recommended that you be prepared for medical emergencies, particularly in remote areas. Medical care can be very difficult to come by if you are more than a few miles from the nearest medical facility. Basic first aid is the minimal level of care you should be trained in providing, however, becoming medically certified in Wilderness First Responder is the current standard. Medical training does not insure the lack of emergencies or the absence of injury or sickness. It does however prepare us to provide the best care while in the field. Knowing how to care for a sick or injured person greatly increases that person's wellbeing when professional help is far from your

⁶ Meyer, K. How To Shit In The Woods: An Environmentally Sound Approach To A Lost Art. Berkeley: Top Speed Press, pp 22-23.

location. There are a number of organizations which can provide this training for you.⁷ I have included some references, however, there are several which can suit your needs. You need only to do a bit of research to find the one which is best for you.

⁷ 1. The American Red Cross.
2. NOLS.

Getting to know the forest

By Linda Houck

“The question is not what you look at, but what you see.” Henry David Thoreau

Description

Participants will be using a creative arts booklet to learn about the forest. Creative arts include writing a story, drawing a sound map, spending time studying birds, etc.

Audience: Community adult level.

Group size: 6 – 12 participants.

Duration of lesson

Length of lesson may vary due to travel time. Allow 50 minutes for solos, and 5 to 10 minutes each for sharing creations.

Location: Forest setting.

Goals for the teacher

- lesson will bring a sense of wonder and reverence.
- lesson will provide participants with the freedom to express what they experience in the forest.
- lesson will expose learners to a forest environment.

Objectives for participants

- participants will share a story from childhood or adulthood.
- participants will express their time in the forest through creative activities.
- participants will share how they see the forest in a new way.

Materials needed

- all materials need to be enough for the group*
- activities booklet
 - pencils

- writing surfaces
- time keepers
- boat whistle, which is loud, to signal group to reconvene

Preparation

Booklets should be copied with enough for each participant individually. You should also be familiar with the forest area you are sending the participants to.

Disclaimer

Before going out on a trail read the trail information in section on Training and Recommendations for the Field. In addition you will want to be prepared for risk management. You must emphasize to participants to not deviate from the established trail. In order to keep tabs of where each participant is, it is imperative that you establish boundaries for them. Emphasize to them that staying within shouting distance is required in order to keep track of where everyone is. Let everyone know that it is easy to lose track of time, that you need to ensure safety, and that all will need to be accounted for when the group reconvenes.

Doing the activity

1. Participants will be doing the lesson along a trail in a forest. An optimal forest setting would include a variety of landscape features. An example might be to have mixed age trees and other plants, a stream, rock formations, a well marked trail, etc. A forested area with no distractions from the modern world is best.
2. Start in an appropriate gathering place for the size of the group. A wide spot on the trail will work, or other places near the trail which can accommodate the size of the group.
3. Ask participants to share a story from childhood or as an adult in which they appreciated or became acquainted with a forest.
4. If participants do not have a story to share, tell them about an experience you had in a forest. If you do not have a story of your own, use the one included with this lesson.
5. Tell participants they will have the opportunity to explore the forest on their own and to make their own creations with an activities booklet.
6. Hand out the activities booklet, pencil, writing surface, and time keeper to each participant.

7. Explain that they are not required to fill out every page, but to do the pages that most appeal to them. Mention that there are extra sheets in the back of the booklet if they need them. They will have 50 minutes to explore and use the forest for their activities and then return.
8. Send participants into the forest reminding them to be within shouting distance, and the signal to return will be a blast from the whistle.
9. When everyone has returned ask them to share their creations with someone in the group.
10. When one-on-one sharing is starting to die down, ask everyone to share their creations with the group if they wish.
11. Ask if anyone has anything they would like to share from their time in the forest. Do they see the forest in a new way? Some participants may already include this in their sharing of creations.

Story about the forest

One of my very first memories of when I felt I had passed into adulthood was when I visited a forest for the first time. I remember walking on a trail at my own pace and away from the main group I was with. I was taking in all of the conditions which my senses were encountering. It was a warm summer day and the sunlight filtering through gaps in the tree spaces was particularly beautiful. I heard a soft buzz in the air from all the insects and soft thumping from my boots upon the ground. The air was still and fresh with pine. I was out on my own and I think this was one of my earliest recollections of what it meant to be in discovery.

It's a Matter of Survival

Sun, Water, Air, and Food

By Linda Houck

"When we try to pick out anything by itself we find it hitched to everything else in the universe." *John Muir*

Description

Participants will be shown how all living things need four elements to survive by using props, written information, and individual and group activities. Time will be provided for sharing and reflection.

Audience: Community adult level.

Size of group: 6-12 participants.

Duration of lesson

5-10 minutes for each station for each participant, 10 minutes discussion time, and 30 minutes for oven project. Total time will vary depending on participants' participation.

Location: Inside or natural outside location which accommodates the group

Goals for the teacher

- lesson will provide tool for instilling gratitude for what God has provided.
- lesson will expose learners to basic elements of survival.
- interactive activity will help develop teamwork.
- lesson will demonstrate how all living things need four elements to survive.

Objectives for participants

- participants will use water to feel its touch on their skin and will give thanks for this element.
- participants will breathe deeply in contemplation.
- participants will view natural elements as provisions from God.
- participants will share their conclusions regarding the connection between spiritual and natural elements.

- participants will share what information has surprised, impressed, or inspired them.
- participants will choose natural items to represent the four elements.
- participants will work in a group to produce a solar oven.

Materials needed

Materials needed for element stations

- element signs with structures like tables to make signs into stations.
- enough pencils for group.
- enough index cards for group placed at each station.
- 1 bowl of water.
- 1 sponge.
- enough cups of water for group.

Materials needed for solar oven-see solar oven instructions.

- aluminum foil.
- cardboard.
- large and small cardboard boxes (small box to fit inside larger box).
- non-toxic glue.
- non-toxic invisible tape.
- plastic wrap.
- cutting device.
- newspaper.
- black construction paper.
- staplers.
- copies of instructions for project with extras for passing out.

Preparation

Stations need to be set up prior to lesson start. Use the sun, water, air, and food card examples to make large signs. Set-up each sign as a separate station which participants can visit apart from each other. At the water station, provide bowl of water with sponge and cups of water.

Stations can also be set up using your own ideas, with props used as symbols to represent the different elements. Props should be simple not ornate or distracting to the station focus. Natural objects are best for this purpose, using pieces of driftwood, a few pebbles, a fir sprig or alder leaves, a basket of soil, etc. are simple enough and can be manipulated for variation. Use your imagination.

For solar oven, make a model beforehand so that you can show participants the finished product they will be making. Have all materials available when group reconvenes.

Doing the activity

1. Tell participants they will be learning about the four elements which all things need to live.
2. Explain-all living things need four things to survive, energy from the sun, water, air/oxygen, and food. Without these four elements all life on this planet would perish.
3. Next, tell the group that they will be learning about the four elements at the four stations. Walk the group over to the stations and explain what they will be doing as they visit each of them, one at a time.
4. Tell participants to read the information at each station, follow each step, then take a blank card to write down their answer to the question. Then when everyone has finished going through each station, the group will gather together and discuss the questions and they may share their answers with the group if desired.
5. Tell participants that they may linger at each station as long as desired and to take the appropriate amount of time which they need in order to take in the information and complete the activity.
6. Explain to participants as they wait for the stations to become available, and again when they have visited each station and are waiting for the group to reconvene, to look around and find one natural item that represents each of the four elements, and to take their time doing so.
7. Hand out pencil to each participant and send them to stations.
8. When all participants have returned, collect pencils.
9. Read each verse to the group one at a time and then ask how these verses have spoken to them regarding the four natural elements.
10. Ask if any of them has been surprised by the information and how it has impressed or inspired them.
11. Ask the group what items they found that represents the four elements.
12. Tell participants they will now be doing the sun activity as a group.
13. Provide participants with solar oven materials and instructions and show them the model you have made in preparation.
14. Ask the group to work together as a group so that each of them can participate in the activity.

15. Allow group to work together without doing the work yourself. Help them if requested.
16. Remind the group the oven will work if made correctly, however there is not enough time to cook anything with the limited amount of time during the lesson, though they are welcome to make a solar oven at home if they desire.
17. Ask if anyone would like a copy of the solar oven instructions and pass them out.

Solar oven instructions¹

1. Find two boxes. One should fit inside the other with a 2-3 inch space on each side (This can vary slightly-the space will be filled with newspaper).
2. Line the bottom of the large box with crumpled newspaper.
3. Place the smaller box inside the large box.
4. Fill the space between the sides of the two boxes with crumpled newspaper.
5. Line the sides of the inside of the smaller box with aluminum foil. You can use a non-toxic tape or fold the edges of foil over the top of the box to hold it in place.
6. Line the bottom of the inside of the smaller box with black construction paper to absorb heat.
7. Lay a piece of cardboard on top of the large box and trace the shape of the box onto the cardboard.
8. Add two inches around the trace line and cut out to make a reflector.
9. Cover the cardboard piece with aluminum foil. Smooth out any wrinkles and secure the aluminum foil to the cardboard with non-toxic glue or tape.
10. Staple the reflector to the outside back of the large box.
11. Situate the oven with the box opening up and the reflector facing the sun for maximum heat.
12. Place food to be cooked in the solar oven.

¹ www.ehow.com/how_2083_make-solar-oven.html

13. Stretch clear plastic wrap across the top of the large box. Secure the plastic with tape around the entire box.

14. You can also get additional instructions for another oven with pictures at www.oksolar.com/samples/sunoven1.html.

Element cards

Provided below.



And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years."

Genesis 1:14

Environmental tidbit

The sun is about 93 million miles from the earth. It is the perfect distance for all life on earth to live. If it were any closer, we would burn up, and if it were farther away, we would freeze. God placed the sun in exactly the right place for all of creation to survive.

Ecological challenge

Most energy from the sun is not captured for use; instead we use other forms of energy like electricity. Electricity is produced from systems which create pollution.

Activity

Will be done after group is done viewing stations.

What you can do?

Reduce energy use by...

- 1. Recycling**
- 2. Buying products with less packaging**
- 3. Not buying something when you don't really need it**
- 4. Buying used products when you can to reduce energy production**
- 5. Installing light bulbs which use less energy to illuminate**

Thought

How does the verse in Genesis 1:14 and the natural element of sun relate to each other?

WATER ~

Jesus answered (the woman at the well), “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

John 4:13-14

Environmental tidbit

H²O is unique. It is unlike any other liquid...its properties make a great solvent.

Ecological challenge

Water shortage is a prevalent concern in many countries. The U.S. uses far more water than is ecologically sustainable. If we continue to consume water at its current rate, we will also deplete this resource in our own country.

Activities

- 1. Use the sponge in the bowl of water to get your skin wet. It can be the back of your hand, the top of your head, your face, or the back of your neck. After you do this, close your eyes and thank God for his life giving water.**
- 2. Raise a cup of water and thank God for his provision.**

What you can do?

- 1. Use less water by installing a low flow toilet device**
- 2. Shower every other day instead of everyday**
- 3. Install a rain-barrel then use it to water outdoor plants**
- 4. Take time to learn about the river where you live**
- 4. Remember to be grateful for the water you drink**

Thought

Can you find how the spiritual emphasis in John 4:13-14 is related to the natural element of water?

AIR/OXYGEN



“In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.”

Job 12:10

Environmental tidbit

We breathe air which produces carbon dioxide and in turn plants use it to produce oxygen so that we can breathe.

Ecological challenge to clean air

How can anything live without clean air? Automobiles produce pollution which is the number one environmental challenge of our world. Using alternative forms of transportation can reduce pollution allowing for clean air.

Activity

Close your eyes then slowly breathe in and out with five breaths. On the last breath hold your breath for a few seconds and try to feel your own heart beat. Then think how your heart is pumping blood through your veins and in turn is providing oxygen to sustain your life. Breathe normally and consider how all things are dependent upon air to live.

What you can do?

Start using alternative forms of transportation

- 1. A bicycle**
- 2. Public transport like buses**
- 3. Walking**
- 4. Carpooling**
- 5. Plant a tree**

Thought

How does the verse in Job 12:10 relate to our need for clean air?

FOOD

Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry...”

John 6:35

Environmental tidbit

Everything is connected in a web of life. Each part is dependent upon all other parts to live. If one part suffers, so do the others. In a sense, every part is food for something else which allows it to survive.

Ecological challenge

It takes several acres to produce enough grain to feed a cow, a pig, or a chicken so that we can consume them. Producing grains, vegetables, and the like require much less land.

Activity

Pause now and pray for people and wildlife in the world who are physically hungry.

What you can do?

- 1. Determine to have a meatless diet once or more a week.**
- 2. Grow a vegetable garden and give any extra produce to a local food bank.**
- 3. Have a dinner party once a month serving food solely from the local region. Place a menu at each setting which tells how the local economy was supported by the purchase of the ingredients.**
- 4. Don't overeat.**

Thought

How does the spiritual element in John 6:35 relate to our physical need for food?

Generation Less

Consuming less, sharing more

by Linda Houck

“5% of the population consumes 1/3 of its resources and makes nearly 1/2 its waste. That 5% is us (Americans)”. -*Author unknown*

Description

Participants will be exposed to media sources like video and internet to see how we live in an affluent society. Individual activities and interaction with others will allow participants to compare how simple items are produced, how others live without basic needs, and what things they can do to make positive changes.

Audience: Community adult level.

Group size: 6 – 12 participants.

Duration of lesson: Approximately 80 minutes.

Location

Inside location which will accommodate group and where media equipment is accessible.

Goals for the teacher

- lesson will instill an ethic of consuming less and sharing more.
- lesson will expose learners to how much production goes into producing goods.
- lesson will inform participants what is an ecological footprint.

Objectives for participants

- Participants will share their impressions of consumption video.
- participants will discuss what things they believe they as an individual over consume.
- participants will describe how producing material goods is a multi-step process.
- participants will share a story of those who do without the basic necessities of life.

Materials and equipment needed

- enough pencils and index cards for group.
- internet ready computer.
- Large computer monitor big enough for the group size, or set up a projector and screen which is connected to the computer which you are using for the video.

Preparation

Prior to lesson start ensure website is accessible. Create a space for the group to watch the web-video.

Doing the activity

1. Show video from the website www.storyofstuff.com.
2. Ask participants what their impressions are of the video.
3. Ask participants to write down as many things as they can think of that they feel they consume too much of. Use the list provided for ideas. Let everyone share their ideas.
4. Ask participants what they as an individual can do to consume less.
5. Ask participants to describe all the steps it takes to produce one of the following...a pencil, a daypack, a pair of Levi jeans, carpenter's boots, a floor lamp, a plastic bottle of soda, or a strand of Christmas lights. You may have some ideas of your own. Just keep in mind simple objects.
6. Talk about being an affluent society (use notes).
7. Ask participants to take a few minutes and think about those they know or know of that are without the basic necessities of life. Pause here.
8. Ask participants to share a story of those who do without. You should want to share one of your own or use the one provided with this lesson.
9. Show participants how to take the test from the website <http://www.myfootprint.org>, then click on Take the Quiz below. Take the quiz yourself, and tell how they can find their own footprint by taking their own test at home.

List (not comprehensive)

Consume less...

- Energy
- Packaging
- Computer paper - print on both sides, and don't print it if you don't really need it.
- Use durable materials instead of paper and plastic throw away supplies.
- Reuse whenever possible.
- Disconnect standby devices-the things that use electricity just by being plugged in whether we are using them or not.
- Borrow from a community source or neighbor instead of buying a product that you will not use on a regular basis.
- If you honestly need to buy something buy products from sustainable sources.
- Check out books from the library instead of buying new books - many libraries now have interlibrary loan systems available.
- Give gifts which do not require a monetary exchange-as in doing something for the person, re-gifting an unwanted present, or making something from materials you already have at home.
- Fuel-conserve and find ways to cut down on driving. Carpool, use public transportation, ride a bike, and walk when possible.
- Don't fill up all space, leave open space to remind yourself you are going to live without so many possessions.
- De-clutter and donate things other people can honestly use.
- Wear out the cloths you have before buying new ones.
- Live at a sustainable level even if you can afford more.

Notes-affluent society

We live in an affluent society. This means we consume far more than we need. Many believe they should live for themselves without considering their neighbor who is in need. I John 3:17-18 says "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with action and in truth." Living affluently not only uses natural resources at a non-sustainable rate, many are around us who are in need which we could care for if we were really concerned for them. James 2:15-16 says "Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?" We must not think only of ourselves, we must think of those in the world who do not have the basics to live. This can be our neighbor next door, or it can be those in other countries.

A story about those who live without

In the early 80's when I traveled to the Philippines on a short term mission, I was given a tour of the town of Manila where I was staying. This was my orientation to see the different departments which the organization operated. One of our stops was to go to the garbage dump just outside the city limits. When we arrived I noticed from afar people walking around in the heap. At first glance I thought it was a group of garbage collectors working. Then my tour guide motioned with her hand and said it was a group of people who lived there. I then noticed not only men but women and children as well. My guide pointed out the shack-like structures which I thought were the remains of someone's trash. Surprisingly they were really the homes (if you can call them that) of the people who lived on the garbage heap. The poorest of the poor had to create a living from the garbage and disposal of others. I couldn't fathom how anyone could live that way or how they could live that way.



OUR FATHER'S WORLD

May 2, 2009 (Saturday)

Instructor-Linda Houck

Class #4 Getting To Know the Forest

Welcome to our Father's creation—where his glory is revealed in every part of the natural world. Please take a moment to carefully read this letter. It contains information that will help you have an enjoyable experience. Bring this letter with you for reference.

MEETING TIME AND LOCATION: We'll meet promptly at 9 AM on Saturday, May 2, in the church foyer.

ENDING TIME AND LOCATION: Our excursion will last until approximately 5:00 PM.

CARPPOOLING: Carpooling is not only good for the environment and economical, but also provides an opportunity to get to know your fellow participants. Since this is a no cost excursion I am relying on each of you to help the drivers with the cost of gas. Carpools are for the convenience and comfort of participants and are not an undertaking of Linda Houck, but are voluntary actions of participants and drivers. There will be no liability made against Linda Houck or the church as a result of our activities.

INSTRUCTOR BIO: Linda Houck is a naturalist and graduate student at Western Washington University at Huxley College of the Environment. As a dedicated Christian and steward of God's creation, Linda focuses her teaching on combining faith and ecology, using the great outdoors when possible. Linda has been teaching individuals and groups for nearly three decades. Teaching applications in the past have consisted of natural history programs for the U.S. Forest Service, various practical skill developments, and bible instruction. Linda has been leading a variety of worship music venues since 1980. She is also a certified WFR for administering medical care in the field when needed.

GENERAL ITINERARY: After introductions and an overview of the day's itinerary, we will travel to our program location. After stopping briefly to address personal needs, we will travel casually to the meeting site where our program will begin. During this time we will explore how this wonderful place is a connection to God and the resources he has created for us to steward and enjoy. The weather is unpredictable in the outdoors, so dress for warmth and water resistance. At midday we will take a break for lunch, under cover if the weather is inclement. After lunch we will do some informal hiking if everyone wishes. We will return to our starting location by 5:00 PM.

WHAT TO BRING: The program will be held rain or shine and it is possible that the weather can become cold and damp, or hot and muggy. How well you are prepared for the weather can have a direct influence on how much you enjoy the experience. Clothing should be suitable for standing in warm or cold weather and **GOOD RAINGEAR** is a must. Wool and polypropylene work best to keep you warm in wet weather—cotton gets wet, stays wet, and makes you cold! The following items serve as a basic checklist:

- sturdy, warm, loose fitting waterproof walking shoes or boots (not tight fitting!)
- spare shoes in your car for the ride home in case your feet get wet
- wool socks and liners (a spare pair is a good idea!)
- long underwear—top and bottoms (Wear it! There isn't a good place to change.)
- wool or fleece trousers
- turtleneck
- warm sweater
- warm wind resistant jacket or parka
- warm hat
- waterproof raincoat and rain pants
- sunscreen
- sun hat
- writing surface and writing utensils
- your lunch, water bottle, snacks and hot drinks
- sit pad

Please call me if you have any concerns.

MEALS: While you may not be super active, the day may likely be cold. Your body needs calories to burn in order to stay warm; so bring a big healthy sack lunch, lots of snacks, and a thermos of warm drinks. Staying hydrated is also an essential for the hiking experience. Bring your water bottle with you, filled.

COURSE EVALUATION: In order to best serve you, participant feedback is needed. At the end of your program, your instructor will hand out an evaluation form for that day's event. Please take a moment to fill this out on the spot. It's quick, easy, and very helpful in designing other programs. Of course, feel free to share your thoughts anytime via post, phone, or e-mail.

RISK DURING FIELD PROGRAMS: Some of the programs are conducted in the field. Many programs involve hiking and other physical activities and/or travel by automobile.

While every effort is made by the instructor to exercise caution to prevent mishaps, participants must assume full responsibility for their individual safety and must provide their own health and accident insurance. Keep in mind that we are sharing the outdoors with mosquitoes, black flies, ticks, snakes, inclement weather, or other unpredictable natural elements. Weather protective clothing and rainwear are advised.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: All programs are formatted with you in mind. The instructor makes every effort to help you enjoy your program. While programs have a participatory element to them, they are designed for you to have a positive experience most of all. Participation is a main form of learning and will give concreteness to understanding main concepts. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you in this way.

Creation pledge

I believe God created the living world as a beautiful, wondrous, sophisticated place, and is His instrument to teach us of His majesty and glory.

From this day forward I vow to be a good steward of creation which He has entrusted to me as faithful caretaker.

I will guard and protect the earth as I am able by making good ecological choices, will encourage others to do the same, and will give an account whenever others ask me reasons why.

I will examine my heart on a regular basis to know if I am making an ongoing effort to protect the planet, by intentionally looking for opportunities to make changes in my lifestyle which are beneficial to the planet, and will act upon those changes.

I will encourage my pastor to bring biblical teaching on creation stewardship at my place of worship by provide the pastoral staff with resources which I have found for them.

I will study God's word to learn all that I can about my place in creation.

Signed _____ *Date* _____

Printed name _____

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Signed _____ *Date* _____

Printed name _____

Date_____

Evaluation form

Your feedback regarding programs is very helpful and appreciated. Please take a few minutes to fill out this form and return it to your instructor. Thank You.

1. Which part(s) of the program/lesson was/were most helpful in understanding the connection of faith and ecology?

2. Were there any parts of the program/lesson which were difficult to understand or confusing? If so do you have a suggestion of a different approach?

3. What part of the program/lesson was most enjoyable to you?

4. Have any of the concepts from the program/lesson given you a better understanding of the natural world from your previous impressions?

RESOURCES

WEBSITES WITH MANY GOOD RESOURCES

1. <http://ew.ecocongregation.org/om> various
2. www.earthministry.org various
3. <http://nacce.org/> various
4. www.creationcare.org various
5. www.webofcreation.org various
6. www.Christian-ecology.org.uk/econotes-index.htm various
7. www.env-steward.com/lectnry.htm various
8. www.careofcreation.org various
9. <http://creationicare.net> various
10. www.creationcareforpastors.com various
11. www.eco-justice.org curriculum and other good resources
12. www.emagazine.com secular online environmental magazine
13. www.enactwi.org secular has good resources
14. www.elca.org/stewardship/teaching guide on earthkeeping stewardship
15. <http://www.youtube.com/user/NCCCEcoJustice> good video on green movement in the church
16. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkfUE1mYSLM&NR=1> good message on video about God and the environment from New Hope Church www.newhopechurch.ca
17. <http://www.phil.unt.edu/ISEE/> site which discusses issues
18. <http://www.surfinthespirit.com/environment/> good site for obtaining messages
19. www.covchurch.org/resolutions/2007-creation-care good article on creation care

OTHER WEBSITES OF INTEREST

1. <http://ecoethics.net/bib/>
2. www.caringforcreation.net
3.
<http://summit.orbiscascade.org/search?XGod+Is+Green&SORT=D&searchscope=2/XGod+Is+Green&SORT=D&searchscope=2&SUBKEY=God%20Is%20Green/1,316,316,B/1856~b13623403&FF=XGod+Is+Green&SORT=D&searchscope=2&1,1,,1,0>
 This site is called Is God Green? videos
4. <http://www.newdream.org>
5.
<http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/discoveringwherewelive/soundseen.shtml#video>
 deo videos of Calvin Dewitt
6. <http://www.ausable.org/au.pacificrim.location.cfm>
7. <http://en.arocha.org/us-en/welcome.html>
8. <http://biblestudies.stores.yahoo.net/creationcare.html>
9. www.footprintnetwork.org site specifically focused on ecological footprint and global sustainability
10. www.mennocreationcare.org
11. www.cep.unt.edu/enethics.html
12. www.ericademmon.co.uk/EV.html
13. www.iupjournals.org
14. www.coejl.org
15. www.spiritualecology.org
16. www.enature.com
17. www.nccusa.org good information in section on Protecting the Earth
18. www.caringforcreation.net

19. www.christian-ecology.org.uk/

20. www.creationethics.org

MUSIC SOURCES

1. www.worshiptogether.com

2. <http://www.worshipmusic.com/>

3. www.integritymusic.com

4. www.itunes.com

5. www.rapsody.org

6. <http://www.bmgmusic.com/acq/clubs/christian/>

LITERATURE REVIEW

BOOKS

The Environment and Christian Ethics by Michael S. Northcott

Northcott gives a summary of environmental history as it relates to Christianity and Judaism, and equates such things as fertility of the land being the outcome when a righteous kingdom occupies the region. He recognizes some human goods as central to the well being of the non-human world. He reminds us of the perpetual ordering of things, that God structures the cosmos with purpose and efficiency, and suggests the biblical view of nature is closely related to primitive cultures in “that nature is characterized by purposive order and equilibrium which has a deep moral, social, and spiritual significance”. He makes a distinction between what is biblical stewardship and the problems associated with it in the Christian tradition.

To Care For the Earth by Sean McDonagh

McDonagh begins with an overview of environmental challenges which affect all people. He continues to describe the creation of earth in evolutionary terms as though God began the process and then allowed the creation to take over to bring in its present form. He proceeds to describe God in masculine and feminine terms and suggests it as a means for better ecological relationship. He focuses on creating dialog within religious groups and the use of sacraments and liturgy in worship. He maintains that our mechanized society is not only detrimental to ecological health but that it separates us from any lasting connection to spiritual renewal found only within nature. He provides current ecological writings from many religious orders.

Is It Too Late? A Theology of Ecology by John B. Cobb, Jr.

The author lays out an overview of environment at present and addresses population growth as a major contributor to current challenges. He uses the analogy of boat passage as culture with separate class sections in which a more affluent class can have every advantage but everyone in a less fortunate culture is deprived. He describes the engineering of technology and dependence as one of the main sources of environmental disconnect. He distinguishes between Judeo-Christian, humanistic, atheistic, and pagan attitudes toward nature and points out the historical theological inadequacies of each. He uses an evolutionary view to describe the history of nature and explains the difference between exclusionary and inclusionary views for the way people see their place in nature. He asks the question if commitment is possible to solving environmental detriment. He describes an end with dismal consequences if environmental quality is not attained.

Saving God's Green Earth by Tri Robinson

Robinson reminds us that environmental stewardship has always been the church's responsibility. However it has not been played out in our current life. He discusses how many find a relationship with God initially, that for many it is when in nature. He recounts his own experience of believing in God at 16 when spending time in the Idaho wilderness. Robinson sites examples from other Christians who have been steadily plodding along in their ecological work, and have not until recently had any leadership in creation care. He explores their stories. He shows how environmental action and missions directed toward people have a woven connection. Robinson

moves from the individual's responsibility to what can be accomplished as a church. This in turn can cause a rippling effect from an individual up through the world. He gives biblical references and examples of others like Noah who were obedient to God as their work applied to ecology. The author includes internet resources for further helps.

Earth Wise by Calvin B. DeWitt

DeWitt lays out the fundamental principals related to environmental challenges as a framework to build understanding upon. He describes biblical reasons for creation stewardship using history, and Old and New Testament scriptures. He responds plainly and clearly to the most often misunderstood and opposing views of individuals which excuse themselves from creation care. Creation Care is a term within modern Christianity which integrates environmental concern as it applies to faith practice. He gives practical examples for what individuals can do to implement stewardship as an individual, congregation, and community.

Serve God Save The Planet by J. Matthew Sleeth, MD

Sleeth initially quotes several well know leaders of faith who remark about the area of Creation well being and then lays a foundation of stewardship which is evident throughout the book. He cites numerous examples from his own life as a citizen and physician which touch on several ecological topics. He provides clear biblical reasoning for contending with challenges of faith as these challenges relate to ecological issues, and then provides practical answers for how one should live in light of it all. Sleeth weaves in a broader view of the environment as it is connected to the

presence or absence of simplicity in one's life, and constantly points the focus of where attention should remain, to love God and love people.

The Creation by E. O. Wilson

Wilson communicates by making a plea for creation to a southern Baptist minister. He identifies the differences and likenesses of each of them in an attempt to come to common ground for making his argument. Wilson, with a religious upbringing, now having a renowned position in the scientific community, attempts to educate the minister in the value of nature and necessity of creation's stewardship. He explains what nature is, its devastations, why it should be care for, and the challenges and lack of scientific knowledge that remains. Wilson lays out examples from nature to describe uniqueness, delicacies, savageness, beauty, and efficiency. He goes into depth regarding insects, and builds a case for their imperative presence. He continues by assuring the preacher that the discipline of biology is valuable for every field and should influence all modern thinking. He ends his plea by giving a basic overview of how to learn and teach biology, as well as how to endow naturalist qualities in children.

Cherish The Earth by Janine E. Kirk and Donald R. Kirk

The authors lay a foundation which shows creation as good as it reveals the glory of God. Scripture is used throughout to explain the relationship between the natural world and God, redemption, humankind, glory, obedience, justice, etc. A fundamental overview of environmental processes is given to support the subject of stewardship. This book establishes people as part of creation. It explains how our ability to praise

is essential to valuing what God has made, and how our overindulgence of natural resources creates earthly suffering and destruction. Short chapters with discussion questions allow for group as well as individual inquiry and study. Environmental challenges are discussed and stewardship principals are given for healing a suffering planet.

Our Fathers World by Edward R. Brown

Brown begins by describing the natural beauty around us then moves into a discussion on natural disasters and how that affects the poorest populations. This then moves into the subject of over-population. The reading turns to Christ as Creator and sustainer of all creation. The natural world has God's fingerprints integrally in the natural world. We in turn are managers of this world, bringing stewardship for a world that is a temple through which we can worship God at ease. The author discusses dominion and care taking, as if we are choir masters of the great creation choir. He talks about consumerism and the economy. He then reflects on environmental principals which guard against consequences of sin from poor motives in our lifestyle. He reminds us of Christ who is the reconciler of all living things and this reconciliation brings peace. In effect God is the celestial conductor. This has been recognized through the ages with music from the church, even centuries ago. Brown posses the principal that bringing creation into the worship setting and getting into a positive environmental pattern should be integral to worship settings and church programs.

For the Beauty of the Earth by Steven Bouma-Prediger

Prediger begins at a basic level by telling of encounters during childhood then discussing connection to the place we live by asking specific questions as a primer. He continues with dialog about a need for sustainable communities, ecological literacy, and understanding natural processes. The text turns to subjects of environmental challenges, Christianities downfall, and the traditional scriptural vision of ecology. He distinguishes the difference between dominion and domination, wrestling with creation care and the world to come, and worship that is opposed to technological disconnect through affluence. He expands the story of the ark and paints a picture of Christ before and ruler of creation. The author places the challenge of present theological ideology into the hands of consumerism and urges restraint and self-control as an answer to many of the ecological challenges which plague creation. He then urges the reader to not only restrain from doing harm, but to do good.

Life Abundant by Sallie McFague

McFague begins by describing her first encounter with understanding all things are alive. She continues by contrasting abundant living in an authentic way with North American culture. She states consumerism is the modern day pattern of greed and this widens the gap between affluent societies and the poor, and asks who benefits from the mechanized world. She presses the need to have an ecological theology for the entire cosmos. The author delves into the area of gaining insights from experiences in the natural world and questions when is enough enough. She links our responsibility to value earth and conserve the environmental services due to the planet sustaining all

life every second. She voices the challenge of Global Warming and the need for massive institutional planetary change.

A Greener Faith by Roger S. Gottlieb

Gottlieb begins with discussing the implications of religious ideologies using examples of historical figures. He describes how ecotheology plays out in our thinking as compared to different motives of religious and political practices. He lays out the challenge of Global Warming and how this is plaguing the world which shows the presence of God. Gottlieb shows how human life is dependent upon the natural systems of the earth. He continues with a focus on the damaging effects of industrial practices and how impoverished communities pay the consequences for affluent lifestyles within a globalized system. He challenges the reader to have exposure to the outdoors in which reverence for God can be found. He finishes with a discussion of visits with today's environmentalists.

Creation and the Environment by Calvin Redekop

Redekop begins with the subject of economic growth and coming to terms with using up natural resources. He attributes this to usage by some at the expense of others. He challenges the reader to make better lifestyle changes which create a smaller ecological footprint. The author describes much of our environmental challenges are due to technical advances and unchecked environmental plunder. He continues with the challenges to come with population growth. He discusses minority Christian beliefs and their connection to traditional environmental practices and political actions. He makes a connect between the old testament and biblical figures, and the

new testament and life in creation. He lingers on the subjects of the peaceful reign of God, the relationship between God and creation, the fall of man, environmental responsibility, and inconsistencies within the Anabaptist theology.

Christian Environmental Ethics by James B. Martin-Schramm and Robert I. Stivers

The authors begin by discussing population, consumption, and technology as some areas of conflict. They continue with subjects of anthropocentric ideology and the hierarchy of human's attitudes of superiority toward nature. This then works into the area of the four perspectives of Developmentalist, Conservationist, Preservationist, and Critical Eco-Justice. They delve into how the spirit of God's presence in nature provides sensitivity to nature out of love. They discuss the reaction of some who have an off-putting reaction to belief that spirit with nature is idolatry. The book examines environmental restoration and governmental influence, environmental racism, and issues of specific U. S. regions.

Healing the Earth by Richard A. Young

An historic look at the influences of Christian thought in environmental practice. The author explores the ideologies that have splintered off of traditional biblical interpretation and those within this system. He discusses environmental practice of pre, early, and post Christian eras. Young continues with an overview of ecology, the ecological triangle of God, humanity, and nature, and God's ownership of creation. He describes anthropocentric, biocentric, and theocentric views, and finishes with the fall, reconciliation, and restoration of man and a need for reform in church life and active participation in ecological missions.

Redeeming Creation by Fred Van Dyke et al

The authors examine the condition of creation and God's authority over it. They continue with a discussion of the value of this world and turning from sin against the environment to preserving it. They continue by looking at the subjects of the covenant of creation, the loss of the natural world, and the effects of disobedience and stewardship.

ARTICLES

Is Eco-Christianity God's Mandate? by David J. Hill

David Hill begins by acknowledging the opposing views on climate change and the affect of less resistance to environmental concern by our society. He highlights the two main declarations within in evangelical circles, and how it is related to recent polls which determine how church members live out their beliefs concerning the costs of governmental intervention. The author then delves into the area of materialism as one main cancer which allows earth stewardship to become unhitched from our ethic of creation care. He charges evangelicals to put action to our passive beliefs as one way to effectively solves environmental ills.

The Ecological Disconnect (or) What Keeps Us From Responding by Karla Hignite

Karla Hignite begins by describing three areas which create barriers to "earthkeeping" practices; materialism, ignorance, and "bad" theology. She continues by naming a barrier which creates inaction by churches, that teaching subjects within an ecological context can be viewed as something which competes with vital

ministries, rather than enhance them. She suggests creating a ministry team at church to engage the congregation in intergenerational opportunities.

Creation Care by Lester Feder

Lester Feder reports on the activities in evangelical circles, mainly Christian colleges. A minority of students feel isolated from other evangelicals in their efforts to participate in creation care practices. Although there is wide spread acknowledgement that Christians show concern for environmental challenges, even a wave of interest, it is overshadowed by the prevailing assumption that other matters are of greater importance in how time is spent overall. He adds, leadership within this community creates support for helping students to proceed forward. Voting patterns in the past two elections are discussed with their implications of where evangelicals are as a whole on creation care.

Religion and Environmental Education: Building on Common Ground

by Gregory E. Hitzhusen

Gregory Hitzhusen begins by regarding religion and spirituality as important resources for integrating curricula, and the enhancement of outdoor, experiential, and adventure education. He discusses the challenges of educators working in this vein and how to overcome them. Incorporation of religious elements into environmental education is posed. Examples are given from religious circles which provide a starting point for work already being done. The author explains how using religious resources within environmental education practices is beneficial to all, not just for engaging religious audiences.

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APPENDIX

QUOTES

“The goal of life is living in agreement with nature”. – Zeno

“You must not know too much or be too precise or scientific about birds and trees and flowers and watercraft; a certain free-margin, and even vagueness - ignorance, credulity - helps your enjoyment of these things”. - Walt Whitman

“Whenever man comes up with a better mousetrap, nature immediately comes up with a better mouse”. - James Carswell

“I would feel more optimistic about a bright future for man if he spent less time proving that he can outwit Nature and more time tasting her sweetness and respecting her seniority.”
- E. B. White

“Nature does nothing uselessly.” - Aristotle

“The views of nature held by any people determine all its institutions.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

“The finest workers in stone are not copper or steel tools,
but the gentle touches of air and
water working at their leisure
with a liberal allowance of time”. - Henry David Thoreau

from Walden

“We need the tonic of wildness...We can never have enough of nature.”

“Each phase of nature, while not invisible, is yet not too distinct and obtrusive. It is there to be found when we look for it, but not demanding our attention. It is like a silent but sympathizing companion in whose company we retain most of the advantages of solitude...”

“I care to live only to entice people to look at Nature's loveliness.”

“Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as the sunshine into trees. The winds will blow their freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off you as autumn leaves”. - John Muir

“In God's wildness lies the hope of the world--the great unblighted, unredeemed wilderness”.

“When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe”. (*My First Summer in the Sierra*, July 27)

“More and more, in a place like this, we feel ourselves a part of wild Nature, kin to everything”.

(*My First Summer in the Sierra*, September 2)

“I am often asked if I am not lonely on my solitary excursions. It seems so self-evident that one cannot be lonesome where everything is wild and beautiful and busy and steeped with God that the question is hard to answer”.

“Going to the woods is going home”.

“The idea of wilderness needs no defense. It only needs more defenders”. - Edward Abbey

“We would guard and defend and save it [wilderness] as a place for all who wish to discover the nearly lost pleasures of adventure, adventure not only in the physical sense, but also mental, spiritual, moral, aesthetic, and intellectual adventure. A place for the free”.

“Come on in. The earth, like the sun, like the air, belongs to everyone—and to no one”.

“The longest journey begins with a single step, not with the turn of an ignition key”.

“That’s the best thing about walking, the journey itself. It doesn’t matter much whether you get where you’re going or not. You’ll get there anyway. Every good hike brings you eventually back home. Right where you started”.

“...unless the need were urgent, I could no more sink the blade of an ax into the tissues of a living tree than I could drive it into the flesh of a fellow human”.

“We are obliged, therefore, to spread the news, painful and bitter though it may be for some to hear, that all living things on earth are kindred”.

“The earth will solve its problems, and possibly our own, if we will let the earth function in its own ways. We need only listen to what the earth is telling us”. – Thomas Berry

“I love to think of nature as an unlimited broadcasting station through which God speaks to us every hour, if we will only tune in”. - George Washington Carver

“Perhaps, after all, our best thoughts come when we are alone. It is good to listen, not to voices but to the wind blowing, to the brook running cool over polished stones, to bees drowsy with the weight of pollen. If we attend to the music of the earth, we reach serenity. And then, in some unexplained way, we share it with others”. - Gladys Taber

“Ability to see the cultural value of wilderness boils down, in the last analysis, to a question of intellectual humility”. -Aldo Leopold

“The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant: ‘What good is it?’ If the land mechanism as a whole is good, then every part is good, whether we understand it or not. If the biota, in the course of eons, has built something we like but do not understand, then who but a fool would discard seemingly useless parts? To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering”.

“Discovery is adventure. There is an eagerness, touched at times with tenderness as one moves into the unknown. Walking the wilderness is indeed like living. The horizon drops away, bringing new sights, sounds, and smells from the earth”. - William O. Douglas

“Continual input obscures genuine insight”.

- A translation of the Tao Te Ching (5th century B.C.)

“I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness, I hear the ever approaching thunder, which will destroy us too. I can feel the sufferings of millions and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will all come right, that this cruelty too will end, and that

peace and tranquility will return again”. - Anne Frank

"For if one link in nature's chain might be lost, another might be lost, until the whole things will vanish by piecemeal". - Thomas Jefferson

“I hope I never become so used to the world that it no longer seems wonderful”.

-Author Unknown

“The God who fashioned earth and sky, sun, moon, and stars beyond compare. Cannot His workmanship deny, His fingerprints are everywhere”. – Seal

“In intercourse with Nature you are dealing with things at first hand, and you get a rule, a standard, that serves you through life”. - John Burroughs

“The initial step for a soul to come to knowledge of God is contemplation of nature”.

- Irenaeus

“Some people, in order to discover God, read books. But there is a great book: the very appearance of created things. Look above you! Look below you! Read it. God, whom you want to discover, never wrote that book with ink. Instead, He set before your eyes the things that He had made. Can you ask for a louder voice than that?” - St. Augustine

“These creatures minister to our needs every day: without them we could not live; and through them the human race greatly offends the Creator. We fail every day to appreciate so great a blessing by not praising as we should the Creator and Dispenser of all these things”.

- Francis of Assisi

"If you have men who will exclude any of God's creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity, you will have men who deal likewise with their fellow men".

"God writes the Gospel, not in the Bible alone, but also on trees, and in the flowers and clouds and stars". - Martin Luther

"Now if I believe in God's Son and remember that He became man, all creatures will appear a hundred times more beautiful to me than before. Then I will properly appreciate the sun, the moon, the star, trees, apples, as I reflect that He is Lord over all things".

"The creation is quite like a spacious and splendid house, provided and filled with the most exquisite and the most abundant furnishings. Everything in it tells us of God". - John Calvin

"For He has raised everywhere, in all places and in all things, his ensigns and emblems, under blazons so clear and intelligible that no one can pretend ignorance in not knowing such a sovereign Lord...It is evident that all creatures, from those in the firmament to those which are in the center of the earth, are able to act as witnesses and messengers of His glory to all men...For the little birds that sing, sing of God; the beasts clamor for Him; the elements dread Him, the mountains echo Him, the mountains and flowing waters cast their glances at Him, and the grass and flowers laugh before Him".

"In grasses, trees, and fruits, apart from their various uses, there is beauty of appearance and pleasantness of odor...Has the Lord clothed the flowers with the great beauty that greets our eyes, the sweetness of smell that is wafted upon our nostrils, and yet will it be unlawful for our eyes to be affected by that beauty, or our sense of smell by the sweetness of that odor?"

“...Did He not, in short, render many things attractive to us, apart from their necessary use?”

“We have shown that the Son of God created the world for this very end, to communicate Himself in an image of His own Excellency....When we behold the light and brightness of the sun, the golden edges of an evening cloud, or the beauteous rainbow, we behold the adumbrations of His glory and goodness, and in the blue sky, of His mildness and gentleness”. - Jonathan Edwards

“What we call Man’s power over Nature turns out to be a power exercised by some men over other men with Nature as its instrument”. - C.S. Lewis

“It is the Biblical view of nature that gives nature a value in itself: not to be used merely as an argument in apologetics, but of value in itself because God made it”. - Francis Schaeffer

“Another thing to notice from the Biblical viewpoint is God’s covenant of creation...God is going to deal with things as he made them... Thus God treats His creation with integrity: each thing in its own order, each thing the way He made it. If God treats His creation in that way, should we not treat our fellow-creatures with similar integrity?”

“God intends our care of the creation to reflect our love for the Creator”. - John Stott

“We [evangelicals] have tended to have a good doctrine of redemption, and a bad doctrine of creation. Of course we have paid lip-service to the truth that God is the Creator of all things, but we seem to have been blind to its implications. Our God has been too ‘religious’, as if his main interests were worship services and prayer meetings attended by church members. Don’t misunderstand me: God does take a delight in the prayers and praises of his people.

But now we begin to see him also (as the Bible has always portrayed him) as the Creator, who is concerned for the secular world as well as the church, who loves all men and not Christians only, and who is interested in the whole of life and not merely in religion”.

“The Bible is hardly a minor contributor when it comes to providing advice on caring for creation. In fact, the Bible provides such powerful environmental teachings that it can be thought of as a kind of ecological handbook on how to rightly live on earth!” - Calvin DeWitt

“We cannot be all that God wants us to be without caring about the earth”.

- Rev. Dr. Rick Warren

“If I am going to be in the right relationship with God, I should treat the things he has made in the same way he treats them”. - Francis Schaeffer

“Did God make the world? Does he sustain it? Has he committed its resources to our care? His personal concern for his own creation should be sufficient to inspire us to be equally concerned”. - John R.W. Stott

“However we treat the world, that’s how we are treating Jesus because he is the cosmic glue”. - Paul de Vries

“For an oribatid mite, only a crawling thing to the naked eye, a rotting tree stump is the equivalent of Manhattan. For a bacterium, the equivalent is New York State. The woodlot may be seriously disturbed on a macroscale, as perceived by humans who can walk across it in a few minutes. It may be littered with trash. Its trees may be second-growth. But around the base of each tree is an ancient and relatively intact world of miniature inhabitants. The

soil and litter between the trees is their continent, and the nearby springtime pool is their sea”. - Edward O. Wilson

“Now if I believe in God’s Son and remember that He became man, all creatures will appear a hundred times more beautiful to me than before. Then I will properly appreciate the sun, the moon, the star, trees, as I reflect that He is Lord over all things”. - Martin Luther

“Nature truly reveals the nature of God. You can’t look at the anatomy of a plant and not understand that there is a miraculous designer behind it. This is not trying to build a new value in Christianity, it is an old value that is being recaptured”. - Tri Robinson

“The growing possibility of our destroying ourselves and the world with our own neglect and excess is tragic and very real”. - Rev. Billy Graham

“Look carefully at it top and bottom, observe it, read it. God did not make letters of ink for you to recognize him in; He set before your eyes all these things he had made. Why look for a louder voice? Heaven and earth cries out to you “God made me”. - St. Augustine

“A beast need not have utility to have worth. Its value is in the eyes of God. God declares it to be good, as God does the whole creation”. - Calvin B. De Witt

“Our worship of God and just stewardship go hand in hand. Worship of the market and consumerism are compatible with each other, but worship of God and consumerism are not”.

“We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence”. - Mother Teresa

DEVOTIONALS

Every Day Wonder (in part)¹

When you were a child, did you spend time lying in the grass mesmerized by the bugs around you? Did you keep tadpoles in a fish bowl and watch with awe as they turned into little frogs?

Do you remember the wonder you felt when that caterpillar you kept in a jar emerged from his cocoon as a beautiful butterfly? Did you pick bouquets of wild flowers and bring them to your mom. Do you remember working in the garden, planting and harvesting with your parents for the first time? When you are a child these are epic experiences in your life. As adults we need to recapture that sense of wonder. One way to do this would be for us all to become amateur naturalists. It is important that we get to know our own environments in an intimate way.

There is something special about being able to anticipate where the snow drops and the crocuses are going to push up through the last snow of the spring. Or when the trilliums are going to open or wonder and discuss if the swallows that nested above the garage door last year will return to re-build their nest and raise a new brood.

This is an intimacy and understanding that only comes with experience. We need to understand this as a long term process of learning to appreciate, of learning to value, of learning to don the mantle of steward and become comfortable with the fit.

¹ <http://www.re-creation.ca/michaelsdocs.html>

Paradise: Not Lost (in part)

Cornelius Plantinga has noted that we sometimes sing: “This is my father’s world and to my listening ears. All nature sings as around me rings the music of the spheres. This is my father’s world: He shines in all that’s fair; in rustling grass I hear him pass - he speaks to me everywhere”.

A beautiful hymn, but as has been observed - it only gives us half the picture, only paradise and not paradise lost. “Creation,” notes Plantinga, “speaks out of both sides of its mouth now. It both sings and rings but it also groans”.

Creation still declares the glory of God, and we can still enjoy it, but the reality is, we live in a fallen, sometimes dangerous world that won’t be totally re-created until Christ returns. And while creation can shape us, we also have the power to shape it. In principle, Reformed Christianity is environmentally responsible. We place a great deal of weight on the call to stewardship, recognizing that we don’t own this world – it is God’s. I guess the question is, why don’t we always live up to this calling?

Abraham Kuyper talked about the antithesis – the battle ground between the Kingdom of God and the realm of sin that cuts through each of us. This fallen part of our nature makes us seek to fill our own desires regardless of who, or what, might suffer. So, when we ponder the world and the beautiful vistas we are blessed with seeing, let us also consider the images brought about by the degradations we humans have wrought upon the earth and reflect upon our collective and individual callings as Christ’s hands of re-creation.

Wild Places

We need to get out of our classrooms and dorms. We need to take a break from the internet and as God's co-creators enjoy his natural creation. Even the trees were made pleasing to the eye of man. We need to get to know and name the plants and creatures we discover - animals and birds and bugs. The physicality of being active outdoors means getting good, healthy exercise, but it also facilitates an intimacy with our father's creation.

Coming off the trail one time, a student told me that it had been "hard at first" but that she "had gotten use to the silence." At first I didn't understand her comment, but later I reflected on how wired young people are with the internet, cell phones, face book, You Tube and the like. They are often in a state of stimulation. Some students to the point where it affects their concentration and quality of work. Young people like to be connected to their friends. That is part of youth culture and there is no going backward in regard to technological innovations regarding communication. However, in order to become deeper people, they also need to become comfortable with silence and with opportunities for reflection and contemplation. It is not a coincidence that the words recreation and re-creation have the same spelling.

Part of the Reformed understanding of history is that while life began in a garden, we are destined upon the return of Jesus to live in a city, the New Jerusalem, the City of God. What does this mean for the wild places of the world? I think God wants to have wild environments where His feral creatures will have the room they need to live their lives out in ways that are natural to them and which please their maker. Many of us future city dwellers will also need these wild solitary places which can refresh our spirits and energies, reinvigorate us to do what we need to do in our daily urban lives.

Drinking for the first time from a mountain glacier. Watching storms kick up over Georgian Bay. Paddling hard against the current on the French. These activities are like the sacraments of God's book of natural revelation. We who have a chance to go to the mountains are especially blessed, but what I have learned is that we need the mountains even though we may never go there. We need to know their glaciers continue to exist. We need to know that polar bears are hunting on a frozen Hudson Bay. I don't know if I will ever set foot in those wild places, but it does my heart well to know that they exist.

Untitled²

by Pam Powers Moore

Some of my fondest memories as a child and early teen are of times when I would take walks through the woods behind my parent's home to sit on top of a hill overlooking a small community that sat nestled below it. As I sat there in the stillness of God's creation, listening to the sound of the birds and watching the beauty of the trees and flowers around me, I felt His presence in a way that was equal to any church service I have ever participated in. My faith was nurtured on that hilltop, and in times when my faith grows weary, I find myself returning to nature to restore and replenish the faith that is deep within my soul.

Many of us have had our most meaningful spiritual experiences in relationship to the environment. Beauty provokes us to transcend our mundane concerns, shortcomings and conflicts. We have heard the voice of God in our woods and waterways, in bird song or the remarkable delicacy of a flower. Yet, there are those around us who readily abandon the idea

² <http://thesaurus.reference.com/browse/expound>

of a higher power, or ascribe all this complexity to the whim of chaos. For me, when I look into the eyes of nature, and see all the beauty that God has placed here for us to enjoy, there is no denying His presence in the world He created, or in my life. In those still, quiet moments when I am intertwined with Him, He is as real as the air I breath, and His voice speaks to me as softly as a gentle breeze.

I often find myself looking at the clouds by day and the sunset by night, admiring the colors and the way that God seems to paint His beauty across the sky for all to see. He is quite the artist and nothing can compare to the beauty that He sets before us. This spring, I have particularly been impressed by the colors of the leaves and blooms that have covered the landscapes. And, have you ever seen so many different shades of green? It is amazing !!!

Untitled

The 19th-century English poet Gerard Manley Hopkins once wrote that “The world is charged with the grandeur of God.” And in equally moving words, the psalmist David wrote:

“The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.

There is no speech, nor are there words;
Their voice is not heard;
yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.” Psalm 19: 1-4

Throughout human history, our poets, writers and mystics have seen God's reflection in nature. And they have been inspired, even compelled, to share their visions.

Think for a moment of all the images from nature that have been and continue to be evoked as metaphors for God or some aspect of the Divine: fire, wind, water, earth, sun, and light. The presence of God has also been symbolized by thunder and lightning, a towering mountain, an indestructible rock, a self-contained seed, a mighty tree, and an unfolding flower. Something of God has been revealed in the blazing eyes of a tiger, a soaring eagle, a cooing dove, and a beautiful butterfly.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson put it in his classic book *Nature*, "Nature is the symbol of spirit." Indeed it is, and in fabulous diversity!

Human beings have always been drawn to the beauty and majesty of nature, but nature invites us to look deeper. It's as if God is hiding behind every tree, under every rock, over every hill, across every meadow, at the bottom of every lake, through every cloud, on the wings of every bird, and in the eyes of every animal. It's as if God is playing hide-and-seek with us and waiting for us to discover the One in all.

"The happiest man is he who learns from nature the lesson of worship," wrote Emerson. "The noblest ministry of nature is to stand as the apparition of God. It is the organ through which the universal spirit speaks to the individual, and strives to lead back the individual to it."

A Different World³

by Eugene H. Peterson

It is morning. I slept in a little and noticed my thoughts were in neutral when i awoke, not scattered and jumping from one topic to another as they often do. Neutral is a more peaceful state of mind.

First I called Eli, text messaging, "I luv u," and then I put his clothes in the dryer while the water was heating for my coffee. I then walked out the sliding doors to sit in the sun on the north porch.

A different world.

Those panes of glass divided my moment in two. On one side, the hum of the dryer, the stagnant air, my work, thoughts of the day's tasks, the morning chores; and on the other, birds, katydids, insects, refreshing air, distant vehicles, and ... God.

Although I had just awakened from restorative sleep, this was my time of mental and spiritual restoration and preparation. Oh how much better absolutely everything goes, when I take my time in this quiet place.

Song 2:10 My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

God Plants My Garden

Last year I planted about twenty shrubs and several perennials. The cattle ate some of the shrubs, while the rabbits ate the rest (except for the roses). Others perennials are

³ <http://www.easyhomeschooling.com/blog-fields-with-god.html>

blooming this year along with God-planted wildflowers. Last year while weeding I left the colors and types I wanted. Such as purple ground cover by the steps to the walkout, and a taller species lining the walkway by the arbor and near the "me-planted" flowers. I'm finding the landscaping is a partnership, and what a partnership! The Creator not only walks with me and talks with me in "the garden," he has been the master designer. I love it!

In a like manner, we should walk and talk with our Creator in the garden of our homes and families. Let him be the master designer. Let go of the need to have the "last word." His design is so much better than ours.

Untitled⁴

Creating things and making crafts are so much a part of childhood. From mud pies to paper dolls, very young children begin to act on their environment by using their minds and power to create.

As humans, it is easy to see ourselves as creators, but in fact we are not creators. We are only re-creators. We take items that already exist and fashion them into something else, but Genesis 1 tells a different story. Genesis 1 tells of God's making everything from nothing and nothingness. Into the deep void, God spoke, and light came, then day, night, and sky. God's work as Creator means God made it all from nothing. God is the source of creation, and our re-creation depends on the stuff of his creation, including our hands, minds, and ideas. God's creation did not stop with the first chapters of Genesis. God did not act like a giant clockmaker, starting the clock, hanging it in the heavens, and walking away to listen and observe the marking of time. Rather, God tended his creation even to the point of

⁴ <http://www.bgct.org/texasbaptists/Document.Doc?&id=4776>

realizing it was going astray. God's care for his creation meant that he would redeem his world and his people by sending his one and only Son as a powerless and helpless infant. In the life and sacrifice of Jesus, all creation would have the opportunity to rejoin their Creator—to be made anew. The first light of creation became the light of redemption, available to us all.

Untitled

How could a God love his creation so much that he would provide so many rich, wonderful, and mighty things and then allow human beings the opportunity to destroy the work of his hands through disobedience and sin? When humanity chose to do things their own way instead of God's way, the impact was not only on people but also on all of creation. All of creation groaned when human beings chose to disobey. God made man and woman and gave them everything, including the choice to be faithful to him or not and the consequences of that choice. The choice they made was to follow their way instead of God's way. We still make that choice.

In response, it would have been easy for God to walk away and allow humanity to die with their choices. Instead, God gave humanity and, indeed, creation, an opportunity for redemption.

God made us and offered us choices. Now God is saving us from the consequences of our wrong choices—the punishment of an eternity without him, his peace, and his love. When baby Jesus came to this earth, God emptied himself into the form of a baby destined to live and die for us.

The Creator gave and gave and continues to give to us.

Coyote Ugly⁵

Encountering a coyote early one morning in Knoxville, TN, gave me a greater appreciation of the need for a sacred sanctuary. A short reflection on Psalm 96 v 6.

Psalm 96:6 Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary.

I saw my first coyote, very early, the other morning. It was beside the place where I like to fish. I had just put my fishing tackle back into the car, when I saw this thin looking, ugly dog cross the path. It was carrying the remains of a dead fish in its mouth and headed over to some rocks to chew awhile.

At first I thought it was an abandoned puppy. It was gaunt and thin, but as I watched it, I realized it had the wizened look of a fox. There was no bushy tail, so I counted that out. It was the eyes that made me realize this wasn't an abandoned pet. Dog's eyes are usually big and round; this animal's eyes were small and peering at me.

I tried to take a picture of the creature, but my camera was out of focus. When I got home, I looked up a few images of coyotes on the Internet. My suspicions were confirmed. It was a coyote – an ugly looking scavenger, if ever I saw one.

I guess my fishing hole must be part of the coyote's territory. With all of the development that is going on, its refuge must be constantly diminishing. The woods next to my fishing hole must be its sanctuary. Perhaps I'll get the chance to see it early one morning again. I hope so.

When we talk about sanctuaries in the church, we're usually referring to our churches. They have become the centers of our spiritual habitats, where we can feel safe and

⁵ <http://glenkirk.blogspot.com/2008/07/4-minute-devotions-coyote-ugly.html>

experience the presence of God's peace and love. As spiritual places and values begin to diminish around us, our havens of holiness become crucial to our relationship with Christ. In the midst of our troubles, worries, and anxieties, we need the church to be a solid foundation of hope, healing, and holiness for our lives.

So, today, let us give thanks to God for the churches where we engage in worship, experience fellowship, and enhance our discipleship. These sacred sanctuaries add so much to our hearts and spirits, helping us become better followers of Christ and servants of His Kingdom.

A Reflection of God's Glory⁶

"How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures . . . May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works". (*Psalm 104:24, 31*)

Modern technology is amazing. I remember as a child watching high-speed photography of a flower that budded and bloomed. The photography captured days of nature's movement and beauty, so that in a few minutes I could see and understand what took place in my garden. Even though we can see pictures, movies, and read books on the wonder of nature, there is nothing like experiencing it for ourselves.

So often, we miss the glory of God in nature. Stress and busyness hinder our senses from recognizing the beauty of God's creation. We allow life's mundane tasks to strip us of opportunities to increase our faith. The earth's Creator gifted us with the five senses—sight,

⁶ http://www.susanneonline.com/TrustedTruths_Archives/SusannesDevo-A_Reflection_of_God_Glory.htm

hearing, taste, smell, and touch. He did this so we can experience His character and personality.

Our God rules nature—nature does not control God. The Creator spread out the stars in the heavens and set the foundations of the earth. He covered it with water and then set the boundaries of the seas. He assigned the rivers to their places in the mountains. He provides water to all living things. God causes grass and plants to grow. He provides nutrition and lodging for His creatures. He enables us to cultivate and work the earth so we, in return, will glorify Him.

The Lord has given us proof through nature that He exists and that He provides for His creation. My faith increases when I stop to think about the miraculous beauty of nature. If God can take care of the mighty heavens and the spinning earth, then I *know* He is able to take care of me.

God's Morning Gift⁷

by Maribeth Spangenberg

No sooner do we set up camp, than my husband seeks out his awning lights. He carefully clothes pins them to the overhang's perimeter, plugs them in, and, at the first sign of dusk, sits and enjoys their subtle glow. This ceremony is a vacation ritual, and one that we warmly refer to as "Dad's Thing."

⁷

One year, I found on sale in a craft store, two sets of multi-colored, stringed pin-wheel lights. They were the perfect replacement for my husband's worn and tattered, existing ornaments, and a great gadget gift for Christmas.

The next year's summer vacation found us all enjoying a nightly breeze, as we were entertained by the twinkling white lights engulfed in each gently, spinning pin-wheel.

One morning, I woke up earlier than usual, and relished time alone with the Lord out under the trailer awning. I had a spectacular view of a sun-glistened lake below, chirping birds for background, and the feel of cool morning temperatures. After reading my Bible, I closed my eyes to pray. Suddenly, I was aware of a loud buzzing overhead. I remained motionless, fearing that it was a bee of humungous size. However, much to my amazement, when I ventured a peek, I beheld a hovering hummingbird.

I watched in awe as it sought sweet nectar from the now, still pinwheels. Into every fourth ornament it stuck its long, needle-point beak. The little body appeared still in midair, as it traveled down the line of extinguished lights, and then flew off.

I viewed the spectacle as an early morning blessing from God. This amazing little creature was one of the Lord's miracles of nature, whom He sent as evidence of His Presence.

Within minutes the little bird returned, and again traveled down the line of lights, affording me another view of its miraculous movement. Disappointed in the lack of nourishment, it then darted off towards the trees.

This was one of my blessings of vacation. God knew my desire to get away from life's busyness to spend time alone as a family. He also knew my yearning to keep time alone with Him.

Little did I know on that Christmas morning, that MY small gift to my husband would someday be God's tool to bring a little gift to me.

ICE BREAKERS, GAMES, AND CHALLENGE ACTIVITIES

ICE BREAKERS

Group Juggle⁸

Set up & instructions for 1st round of group juggling

- Arrange participants in a circle, not too close, not too far from one another
- Include yourself in the circle
- Explain that you are going to throw a ball to someone - pick someone out & ask their name, then say
 - "Hi Freddy, my name is James...here you go!"
 - [underarm throw a ball to Freddy]
 - Freddy then says
 - "Thank you James", picks someone and says
 - "Hi X, my name is Freddy...here you go!" [throw]....they say
 - "Thank you, Freddy] and on we go.
- If you're not trying to learn names, skip the naming part & just throw!
- The challenge from here is simply to get the ball thrown around to everyone in the circle, and finally back to the trainer.

⁸ www.wilderdom.com

2nd round of group juggling

- I then say, "Right, well done, now let's see if we can that again - making sure we use the same order, and using each other's names. Remember to say the name of the person you are throwing to, and thank the person, by name, for throwing it to you, OK?"
- On the second round, most people will be challenged to remember who to throw it to, and the two names! Take it slow, help the group out, so that each person has a successful second round.

3rd round of group juggling

- I then say, "Good, so how about we do it again, but this time, let's let's see how fast we can do it, OK? Here we go...Hi Freddy, my name is James...." [throw]
- It will go pretty fast this time, and the group will probably feel quite pleased with themselves.

4th round of group juggling - introducing more balls

- I then say, "That's great, but I think you can do faster than that. Come on, let's see how we can really go..." [I then throw and say the name with super fast enthusiasm to set the tone!]
- After the first ball has passed through a few hands, I take a 2nd ball out of my pocket (surprise!), and casually, but earnestly say "Hi Freddy...." [throw].
- By now everyone is so well trained, the 2nd ball will automatically keep going, and there will be a detectable sense of challenge/excitement.
- After a bit, I introduce a 3rd and 4th ball, up to about 6 balls.

- Usually I let 4 to 6 balls be juggled for a while (note the balls will be coming back again to the trainer - just keep them going). A group of 12 adults can usually handle 4 to 6 quite well.
- If I'm feeling conservative, I just let the group have the success of doing this number of balls, and collect them in when that seems to have been achieved.
- But usually, once the group seems competent at 4 to 6 balls I gradually then introduce an unmanageable number of balls into the juggle & maybe also weird objects (e.g., kids soft toys) which all gets crazy, fun, out of control, etc. and ends in a hilarious shambles.

15 minutes

Complete instructions can be found at www.wilderddom.com.

Two truths and a lie

With everyone grouped together, ask someone to present two truths and one lie to the group.

The object is to stump the rest of the group by making the lie as believable as the two truths.

One at a time people will say what they believe the lie is until the real lie is revealed. Several rounds of this game are common.

An expansive list of ice breakers can be found at www.wilderddom.com.

GAMES

The metaphor game

Group everyone together and have two volunteer to be the ones who need to guess who's chosen. Have them go out of hearing range to devise a mental list of subjects. The subjects

will be varied and numerous. Subjects are simply categories to humorously describe the one who is picked by the group. An example would be the category of biblical characters, kitchen utensils, types of animals, kinds of paper, etc. By the time the categories are chosen the rest of the group will have picked someone who needs to be named by the volunteers. When the group is ready call the volunteers back to the group. They in turn will need to guess who the group picked. The volunteers will begin to guess who's chosen as they play along. They will ask questions like, "If this person was a country, which one would they be?", and "If this person was a plant which one would they be?" The group will answer a multitude of things in return to each question until the chosen person is named.

An extensive list of games can be found at www.wilderdom.com

CHALLENGE ACTIVITIES

Decision, Decisions

To begin a program which requires participants to follow directions or make a distinct decision, a simple activity can be used to accomplish this. This activity greatly helps learners to make decisions when a part of your program requires specific choices. Begin by drawing a line in the soil. Next instruct participants to make a choice between two things which you will name. If they choose the first thing they need to stand to the right of the line. If they choose the second thing they need to stand to the left of the line. Next give two choices-as in "If you like red go to the right, and if you like blue go to the left." With sides direct learners with hand or fingers to point out right or left of the line. Remember which side is truly right or left if you are facing your learners. It is easy to of your right and left instead of theirs. Sometimes participants have a difficult time making a decision from these simple choices.

This is normal and can be a bit of a challenge when it makes no difference to them. This is all for allowing them to develop a sense of making a definite choice. The point is to give them simple and straight forward choices. Other examples include choosing between squares and circles, mountains and oceans, and the list goes on, water or earth, pickles or onions, sticks or stones, eyes or ears, swimming or running, standing or sitting, hot or cold, etc. Any simple choice will do. Although this is an elementary exercise it is interesting all the same due to having the element of mystery attached to it; “what will happen next”. Everyone also likes to see what their fellow participants choose. Play this activity out for five to ten minutes.

Decision, Decisions metaphor

At many times life in Christ can seem tricky because we can't see what is coming next. As time grows short we must make a decision and choose what we believe is best. Whatever we decide it must be a definite choice.

Tarp Flip

Another activity helps participants to work together and create a sense of community. Bring out a tarp for participants to stand on. Fold tarp into a rectangle which will provide participants with a minimal amount of space to stand upon collectively, in close contact. In other words the space available should only give them enough room to stand on plus a smidgen more. Ask participants to all stand on the tarp together. Next tell them they need to work together to turn the tarp over to the other side, all while standing on the tarp. Their bodies must not lose contact with the tarp. If the task becomes easy for them and is accomplished quickly, increase the challenge by making the rectangle smaller. If the challenge is very difficult to accomplish, give them a bigger rectangle. The activity can also

be made more challenging by timing them and then telling them to do the same thing by beating their last record.

Tarp Flip metaphor

Our life can be turned upside-down by the difficulties of this life, but we can gain a proper perspective if we turn our hearts to the Lord. This is a simple concept but it might not be easy to do.

An extensive list of challenge activities can be found at www.wilderdom.com.

POEMS AND ESSAYS

If the Earth were only a few feet in diameter

by Miriam Therese MacGillis, Genesis Farm

Imagine: If the Earth were only a few feet in diameter, floating a few feet above a field somewhere, people would come from everywhere to marvel at it. People would walk around, marveling at its big pools of water, its little pools and the water flowing between the pools. People would marvel at deep rich soil on it, and they would marvel at the very thin layer of gas surrounding it and the water suspended in the gas. The people would marvel at the creatures walking around the surface of the ball, and at the creatures in the water. The people would declare it as sacred because it was the only one and they would protect it so that it would not be hurt. The ball would be the greatest wonder known, and people would come to pray to it, to be healed, to gain knowledge, to know beauty and to wonder how it could be. People would love it, and defend it with their lives because they would somehow

know that their lives, their own roundness, could be nothing without it.

Nature⁹

by M. Linda Steffey

I love the silent, magic times

When Nature hugs me near

I sit in silky grasses

And She whispers in my ear;

My nostrils fill with smell of earth

Of pine and moss and flower

I sit and watch Her loveliness

Hour after hour;

Sunlight through Her lofty trees

Beams of burning light

A butterfly sits resting near

Pretty, fragile, bright..

I forget the hours passing

As the birds go flying by

And wind in Her leggy pines

Gently to me sigh....

I feel close to God here

⁹ <http://www.all-creatures.org/poetry/nature.html>

I feel His Holy Hand

From above He reaches down

And blesses this rich land;

He touches all the oceans

And they turn blue like the sky

And with His guiding Love

He helps the birds to fly;

I love to see His mountains

Stand in their snowy dress

Nature's colors in the fall

Comes from God's caress;

When Nature hugs me near to Her

God whispers in my ear

I sit with all the good He's made

There's nothing else so dear.....

Nearness of God¹⁰

by Walter Snook

A forest is a lovely place where we can quickly learn

To sense the loving touch of God; in flower, tree and fern.

¹⁰ http://superiorpoetry.com/nature_poetry

Surrounded by majestic firs, all dressed in satin sheen,
We move within the verdant walls of foliage fresh and clean.
We gaze at sculptured mountains high with crowns of glistening snow
Like sentinels that guard the paths of all who walk below.

But do we sense a message clear, through nature's muted sound,
Entreating us to trust in Him? There perfect peace is found!
Do we express, with thanks and praise, our worship strong & free,
And contemplate His endless love? Our source of joy is He!

And do we hear, in quiet place, a gentle passing breeze
That breathes His lovely name, and stirs the boughs of countless trees.

We pause beside a mountain stream which springs from earthen breast,
Refreshing all who come this way - a pleasant place of rest!

How wonderful to leave behind those common things and days;
For here we catch our breath and say, "How awesome are His ways!"
Refresh our spirits, help us see your beauty, love and grace.
Thank you for your presence, Lord, within this special place!

The Presence of God in Nature

by David Rains Wallace

The glory and wisdom of God is seen, at least to some extent, in all of His wonderful creation. When we pass through the redwoods on the California coast, we often stop and gasp in awe before those magnificent giants of the forest. Ancient and still growing plants with a tremendous power of life, reaching upward toward heaven itself, pointing the way to God's abode.

Millions of living creatures, some rarely seen, inhabit this beautiful world of soft and gentle light. These pillared plants of ancient birth, that share their space with ferns, shrubs and lilies are home to insects, birds and deer, but also welcome seeking souls, inquiring minds. Mountain streams, so brisk and clear, wind their way by rocks and pools. Trees and shrubs and spring-time flowers reside along its pleasant banks. As in a redwood forest, a refreshing strength and serenity attend our hearts and minds. With a renewed sensitivity, we can truly feel the touch of God.

Whenever you come [here], spend time in solitary communion with the forest so you depart with a feeling of renewal and awe. This is nature's cathedral, where services are held daily under the vaulted roof of the redwoods.

Beneath the Trees

by Wesley Yonts

It's so pleasant in the summertime

To sit beneath the trees

And feel the gentle caress

Of the warm and silent breeze - -

And see the soft, white clouds

Drifting with the wind,

And hear the crickets chirping,

Their voices shrill and thin.

And to know the birds so sweetly singing

As they fly from limb to limb,

And feel the graciousness of God

As I commune with Him.

So let the world go spinning by

And do as it may please

I'll be content to talk with God

And sit beneath His trees.

I Found God in my Garden

by Ruby Snook

I found God in my garden, with dawn's first blush in the sky,

As the bold, bright rays of morning spread forth to evoke a sigh.

My heart was burdened and weary, my spirit was low with care.

As I kneeled to tend the seedlings I discovered that God was there.

`The graceful unfolding petals of daffodils - hyacinths fair,
The grace of lily of the valley, I found that my God was there.

I found peace in my garden, as the noonday sun blazed high.
The roses and tall delphinium turned faces in worship nigh.
I found Him in the evening, as the shadows crept along,
And I found my cares unburdened as I breathed “adieu” with a song.

Stars¹¹

Heaven's stars are the works of God,
The scriptures of his night sky.
After sunsets golden-red glow,
They 're there to captivate the eye.

No one can see beneath their feet,
As heaven's pearls ignite their souls.
To be as one with their maker,
Is the highest of human goals.

Blessed be the candies of night,
Which guide the sailors at sea.
Bathing earth with their soft glow,
For all who love them, as we!

¹¹ <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/animals-and-nature-25-poems.html>

Winter

The cold winds of winter play tunes with the trees
Though now they sound different when striped of their leaves.
Our warm days have gone and for spring we must wait,
And all who are in love pray it won't be too late.

The snow has piled high on the rooftops of town,
As small birds huddle in the bushes they've found.
Everywhere are snowmen standing as guards,
While children throw snowballs from forts in their yards.

Winter's cold days are dreary and often cruel,
But their hardships are used by God as a tool.
His reasons for seasons fit his grand plan,
To strengthen the souls of both woman and man.

Flowers

My job is in the open air
And, Lord, I love the work I do.
For flowers are my joy of life
Though their beauty belongs to you.

Your flowers are so lovely;
Yet, I'm ugly, wrinkled and old.
I've lived beyond my mortal span
As the days I have left unfold.

Your lilies are my pride of life
And many of them there be.
They're worth a fortune, people say,
Though money has little worth to me.

Their glory is my just reward
As their radiant heads they raise.
I dedicate them to you, oh Lord,
With all my love and praise.

Birds

The keeping of birds is part of history,
How far back no one can know.
Once luxury pets of kings and queens,
Or on the shoulders of pirates long ago.

Birds have remained on man's menu,
Though all can be tamed as a pet.
Chickens, ducks, geese and turkeys
Are served on the tables we set.

Noah sent a dove to find dry land,
And it returned with an olive leaf from a branch.
God gave birds feathers for clothes,
So in the elements they would have a chance.

The best way to enjoy wild birds,
Is to attract them close to you.
Providing feed, water, bushes and trees,
Is all a bird lover needs to do.

Birds are really quite remarkable,
When left alone to do their thing.
We have robbed their eggs and plucked their plumage,
And yet they continue to sing.

Dont Miss Out¹²

The man whispered, “God, speak to me”
and a meadowlark sang.
But, the man did not hear.
So the man yelled, “God, speak to me”
and the thunder rolled across the sky.
But, the man did not listen.

¹² <http://www.poemsjunction.com/poems/nature-poems/>

The man looked around and said, "God, let me see you"

and a star shone brightly.

But, the man did not notice.

The man shouted, "God, show me a miracle!"

And a life was born.

But, the man did not see.

So, the man cried out in despair, "Touch me God,

and let me know you are here!"

Whereupon, God reached down and touched the man....

But, the man brushed the butterfly away and walked on

William Blake

To see the world in a grain of sand

And heaven in a wildflower,

Hold infinity in the palm of your hand

And eternity in an hour.

He who binds himself to a joy

Does the winged life destroy:

He who kisses the joy as it flies

Lives in eternity's sunrise.

Ritaihaku

I am asked why I live in the green mountains:

I smile but reply not, for my heart is at rest.

The flowing waters carry the image of the peach blossoms far, far away:

There is an earth, there is a heaven, unknown to men.

BENEDICTIONS, BLESSINGS, AND PRAYERS

The Cantic of the Creatures

by Saint Francis of Assisi

Most High, all-powerful, good Lord,

all praise is yours, all glory, all honor,

and all blessing.

To you, alone, Most High, do they belong.

No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce your name.

All praise be yours, my Lord,

through all you have made,

and first my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day;

and through whom you give us light.

How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his splendor;

Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

All Praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Moon

and the stars; in the heavens you have made them,

bright, and precious, and fair.

All praise be yours, my Lord,

through Brothers wind and air, and fair and stormy,

all the weather's moods,
by which you cherish all that you have made.

All praise be yours, my

Lord, through Sister Water,
so useful, humble, precious and pure.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brother Fire,

through whom you brighten up the night.

How beautiful is he, how cheerful!

Full of power and strength.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through our Sister

Mother Earth, who sustains us and governs us,
and produces various fruits with colored flowers
and herbs.

All praise be yours, my Lord,

through those who grant pardon for love of you;
through those who endure sickness and trial.

Happy are those who endure in peace,

By You, Most High, they will be crowned.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death,

From whose embrace no mortal can escape.

Woe to those who die in mortal sin!

Happy those she finds doing your will!

The second death can do them no harm.

Praise and bless my Lord, and give him thanks

And serve him with great humility.

(not in entirety)

Be praised my lord with all your creatures

but especially with Brother Sun

because you show us light and day through him

and he is lovely glowing with great shine

from you my lord: his definition

Be praised my lord for Brother Wind

and for the air and cloudy days

and bright and all days else because

through these you give your creatures

sustenance

Be praised my lord for Sister Water

because she shows great use and humbleness in her and

preciousness

and depth

Be praised my lord for Brother Fire

through whom you light all nights upon the earth

Because he too is lovely

full of joy and manly strength

Be praised my lord because our sister

Mother Earth sustains and rules

us and because she raises

food to feed us: colored flowers

grass

Be praised my lord for those who pardon by your love

and suffer illness and grief

Bless those who undergo in silence

the poor for whom you hold a crown

Oh praise my lord and bless my lord and thank

and serve my lord with humbleness

Triumphant

National Council of Churches (NCC)

Almighty God, you have called us to tend and keep the
garden of your creation.

Give us wisdom and reverence for all your plants and
animals who share this planet with us and whose lives
make possible our own. Help us to remember that they

too love the sweetness of life and join with us in giving
you praise.

Creator God, you make all things
and weave them together in an intricate tapestry of life.

Teach us to respect the fragile balance of life and to care
for all the gifts of your creation.

Guide by your wisdom those who have power and
authority, that, by the decisions they make, life may be cherished
and a good and fruitful Earth may continue to show your
glory and sing your praises.

Prayer of Compassion

by St. Basil the Great

O God, enlarge within us the sense of fellowship with
all living things, our brothers the animals to whom
thou gavest the earth as their
home in common with us.

We remember with
shame that in the
past we have
exercised the high dominion

of man with ruthless cruelty
 so that the voice of the
 earth, which should
 have gone up to thee
 in song, has been a
 groan of travail. May we
 realize that they live not for us alone but for themselves
 and for thee, and that they love the sweetness of life.
 Amen.

New Zealand Book of Common Prayer

God of unchangeable power, when you fashioned the
 world the morning stars sang together and the host of
 heaven shouted for joy; open our eyes to the wonders of
 creation and teach us to see all things for good, to the
 honor of your glorious name; through Jesus Christ our
 Lord. Amen.

Keeping It In Focus¹³

"There is no place where God is not. God is there in a thousand wonders, upholding rocky
 barriers, filling the buttercups with their perfume and refreshing the lonely pines with the
 breath of his mouth. Descend...into the lowest depths of the ocean, where undisturbed water

¹³ <http://www.appleseeds.org/newdawn.htm>

sleeps, and the very sand is motionless in unbroken quiet, but the glory of the Lord is there, revealing its excellence in the silent palace of the sea. Borrow the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, but God is there."

His beauty is stamped in all of creation:

The glory of God can be seen

from the smallest raindrop

to the mighty flash of lightning

from the tiny rosebud

to the huge magnolia blossom;

from the rich, fertile soil of the Mississippi Delta

to the arid, dusty land of the desert.

We can see His stamp of glory in all the world,

from the music of a sparkling brook

to the majestic tumbling waterfall;

from the gnarled, gentle hands of a loving grandfather

to the birth-fresh fragility of a baby's fingernail;

from the silence of the stars to the peal of thunder;

from the mirror-like smoothness of a placid lake

to the wind-driven thunderous waves smashing on the shore.

In the fresh greenery of the spring; in the dazzling color of autumn; in the joy of discovery on a baby's face; and in the fulfillment and meaning of the New Birth, we can see the glory of God.

Untitled¹⁴

May the blessing of the rain be on you—the soft sweet rain.

May it fall upon your spirit so that all the little flowers may spring up,
and shed their sweetness on the air.

May the blessing of the great rains be on you, may they beat upon your spirit
and wash it fair and clean, and leave there many a shining pool where the blue of heaven
shines, and sometimes a star.

May the good earth be soft under you when you rest upon it, and may it rest easy over you
when, at the last, you lay out under it,

And may it rest so lightly over you that your soul may be out from under it quickly, and up,
and off,

And be on its way to God.

Let Me Know-as adapted from Earth Teach Me to Remember

by John Yellow Lark

Let me know stillness as the grasses are stilled with light.

Let me know humility as blossoms have humble beginnings.

Let me know courage as the tree which stands alone.

Let me know diligence as the ant which crawls on the ground.

¹⁴ <http://islandireland.com/Pages/folk/sets/bleess.html>

Let me know freedom as the eagle which soars in the sky.

Let me know forgiveness as melted snow forgets its life.

Let me remember kindness just as an ocean breeze kindly blows lightly on my skin.

Prayer For The Earth

by Janice and Donald Kirk

O Lord, creator of the universe, Hear our prayer.

We speak to you on behalf of the earth...the planet which you provided with abundant life and intricate forms of beauty, this earth which you gave into our care and keeping.

We confess our failure to care for your creation.

We confess our fault in the destruction, the waste, the greed, the politics of power, the ignorance, the heedlessness that are ruining the earth...

Most of all we confess our separation from you, Lord.

We have not loved you enough, we have not followed your ways.

Forgive us, Lord, Take us once more into your loving arms.

We want to follow Jesus.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit.

Strengthen us for our ministry to each other and to the earth.

Grant us your healing love as we minister to those who need help.

Bless our coming together as a community of Christ to meet in worship, study, fellowship, and sharing.

Bless the earth, Lord, and all its inhabitants.

Bless the abundance of life; may it thrive under our care.

Help us to accomplish all we can for you, in spreading the gospel, in helping others, in restoring and renewing the earth.

We claim your promise that the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord.

Send your peace with each dawn,

Be with us in a flowing love that marks our days,

Sit beside us in the beauty of your world.

When color-drenched sun drops below western horizon,

When the mountains sing your praise, When the lark lifts its voice to the sky, Hear the singing that wells up from our hearts,

Hear the voices of the whole creation in soaring, freely given harmony.

We long for your presence,

Walk once more in your gardens, Lord, the gardens we prepare.

We wait, we watch, expectantly.

We love you, Lord.

In the name of Jesus. Amen

Saint Basil

O God, enlarge within us the sense of fellowship with all living things, our brothers, the animals, to whom thou gave the earth as their home in common with us. We remember with shame that in the past we have exercised the high dominion of man with ruthless cruelty, so that the voice of the earth, which should have gone up to thee in song, has been a groan of travail. May we realize that they live not for us alone but for themselves and for thee and that they love the sweetness of life.

Jewish Prayer¹⁵

How wonderful, O Lord, are the works of your hands!

The heavens declare Your glory,

the arch of sky displays Your handiwork.

In Your love You have given us the power

to behold the beauty of Your world

robed in all its splendor.

The sun and the stars, the valleys and hills,

the rivers and lakes all disclose Your presence.

The roaring breakers of the sea tell of Your awesome might,

the beasts of the field and the birds of the air

bespeak Your wondrous will.

In Your goodness You have made us able to hear

the music of the world. The voices of loved ones

reveal to us that You are in our midst.

A divine voice sings through all creation.

Edward Abbey

How strange and wonderful is our home, our earth,

With its swirling vaporous atmosphere,

Its flowing and frozen climbing creatures,

¹⁵ Roberts, E., and Amidon, E., *Earth Prayers From Around the World: 365 Prayers, Poems, and Invocations for Honoring The Earth*, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, NY, 1991.

The croaking things with wings that hang on rocks
And soar through fog, the furry grass, the scaly seas...
How utterly rich and wild...
Yet some among us have the nerve,
The insolence, the brass, the gall to whine
About the limitations of our earthbound fate
And yearn for some more perfect world beyond the sky.
We are none of us good enough
For the world we have.

Jennie Frost Butler

Infinite Spirit, when I pray each day
for shelter for the homeless,
let me not ignore the pet without a home;

As I ask protection for those in areas
of turmoil and unrest,
let me not forget endangered species of life,

When I pray that the hungry be fed,
let me be mindful
that all God's creatures have need of sustenance,

As I ask Divine assistance for those afflicted
by fire, flood, earthquake, storm or drought,
let me remember that this includes every living thing;
In seeking miracle cures for human disease,
may I also speak for the well-being of the planet itself.

Let the words of my mouth,
the meditations of my heart
and the actions of my life be as one,
that I may live each day in harmony
with Mother Earth. Amen.

Gary Lawless

When the animals come to us,
 asking for our help,
 will we know what they are saying?

When the plants speak to us
 in their delicate, beautiful language,
 will we be able to answer them?

When the planet herself
 sings to us in our dreams,
 will we be able to wake ourselves, and act?

M. J. Slim Hooey

I have come to terms with the future.
From this day onward I will walk
easy on the earth. Plant trees. Kill
no living things. Live in harmony with
all creatures. I will restore
the earth where I am. Use no more
of its resources than I need. And listen,
listen to what it is telling me.

U. N. Environmental Sabbath Program

We join with the earth and with each other.
To bring new life to the land
To restore the waters
To refresh the air

We join with the earth and with each other.
To renew the forests
To care for the plants
To protect the creatures

We join with the earth and with each other.
To celebrate the seas
To rejoice in the sunlight

To sing the song of the stars

We join with the earth and with each other.

To recreate the human community

To promote justice and peace

To remember our children

We join with the earth and with each other.

We join together as many and diverse expressions

of one loving mystery: for the healing of the

earth and the renewal of all life.

Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me

and I wake in the night at the least sound

in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,

I go and lie down where the wood drake

rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things

who do not tax their lives with forethought

of grief. I come into the presence of still water.

And I feel above me the day-blind stars

waiting with their light. For a time

I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Rabbi Nachman Of Bratzlav

Grant me the ability to be alone;
 May it be my custom to go outdoors each day
 among the tree and grasses,
 among all growing things
 and there may I be alone,
 and enter into prayer
 to talk with the one
 that I belong to.

Chinook Blessing Litany (not in entirety)

We call upon the earth, our planet home, with its beautiful
 depths and soaring heights, its vitality and abundance of life,
 and together we ask that it:
 Teach us, and show us the way.

We call upon the mountains, the Cascades and the Olympics, the
 high green valleys and meadows filled with wild flowers, the
 snows that never melt, the summits of intense silence, and we
 ask that they:
 Teach us, and show us the way.

We call upon the waters that rim the earth, horizon to horizon,
 that flow in our rivers and streams, that fall upon our gardens

and fields, and we ask that they:
Teach us, and show us the way.

We call upon the land which grows our food, the nurturing soil,
the fertile fields, the abundant gardens and orchards, and we
ask that they:
Teach us, and show us the way.

We call upon the forests, the great trees reaching strongly to the
sky with earth in their roots and the heavens in their
branches, the fir and the pine and the cedar, and we ask
them to:
Teach us, and show us the way.

We call upon the creatures of the fields and forests and the seas,
our brothers and sisters the wolves and deer, the eagle and
dove, the great whales and the dolphin, the beautiful Orca
and salmon who share our Northwest home, and we ask
them to:
Teach us, and show us the way.

And lastly, we call upon all that we hold most sacred, the presence
and power of the Great Spirit of love and truth which flows
through all the universe...to be with us to:

Teach us, and show us the way.

William Ellery Channing

To live content with small means,
 to seek elegance rather than luxury,
 and refinement rather than fashion,
 to be worthy, not respectable, and wealthy, not rich,
 to study hard, think quietly, talk gently, act frankly,
 to listen to stars and birds, babes and sages, with open heart,
 to bear all cheerfully,
 do all bravely,
 await occasions,
 hurry never-
 in a word, to let the spiritual, unbidden and unconscious,
 grow up through the common.
 This is to be my symphony.

Lama Govinda

To see the greatness of a mountain, one must keep one's distance;
 To understand its form, one must move around it;
 To experience its moods, one must see it at sunrise and sunset,
 At noon and at midnight, in sun and in rain,
 In snow and in storm, in summer and in winter
 And in all the other seasons

He who can see the mountain like this comes near to the life of
the mountain.

Mountains grow and decay, they breathe and pulsate with life.
They attract and collect invisible energies from their surroundings
The forces of the air, of the water, of electricity and magnetism,
They create winds, clods, thunderstorms, rains, waterfalls
And rivers. They fill their surroundings with active life and give
shelter and food to innumerable beings. Such is the greatness
of mighty mountains.

Yokuts Indian Prayer

My words are tied in one
With the great mountains,
With the great rocks,

In one with my body
And my heart.

Do you all help me
With supernatural power,
And you, Day
And you, Night!
All of you see me

One with this world!

Masai Prayer

Thank you Father for your free gift of fire.

Because it is through fire that you draw near to us every day.

It is with fire that you constantly bless us.

Our Father, bless this fire today.

With your power enter into it.

Make this fire a worthy thing.

A thing that carries your blessing.

Let it become a reminder of your love.

A reminder of life without end.

Make the life of these people to be baptized like this fire.

A thing that shines for the sake of people.

A thing that shines for your sake.

Father, heed this sweet smelling smoke.

Make their life also sweet smelling.

A thing sweet smelling that rises to God.

A holy thing.

A thing fitting for you.

Thomas Merton

What a thing it is to sit absolutely alone,

in the forest, at night, cherished by this
wonderful, unintelligible,
perfectly innocent speech,
the most comforting speech in the world,
the talk that rain makes by itself all over the ridges,
and the talk of the watercourses everywhere in the hollows!
Nobody started it, nobody is going to stop it.
It will talk as long as it wants, this rain.
As long as it talks I am going to listen.

Rig Veda I

May the wind blow sweetness,
the rivers flow sweetness,
the herbs grow sweetness,
for the People of Truth!
Sweet be the night,
sweet the dawn,
sweet be earth's fragrance,
sweet be our Heaven!
May the tree afford us sweetness,
the sun shine sweetness,
our cows yield sweetness-
milk in plenty!

East African Medical Missionary Sisters

Spirit of God in the clear running water,
blowing to greatness the trees on the hill,

Spirit of God in the finger of morning,
fill the earth, bring it to birth and blow where You
will.

Blow, blow, blow till I be but breath of the Spirit
blowing in me.

Down in the meadow the willows are moaning,
sheep in the pasture land cannot lie still.

Spirit of God, creation is groaning
fill the earth, bring it to birth and blow where You
will.

Blow, blow, blow till I be but breath of the Spirit
blowing in me.

Spirit of God, every man's heart is lonely
watching and waiting and hungry until,
Spirit of God, man longs that you only
fulfill the earth, bring it to birth and blow where
You will.

Blow, blow, blow will I be but breath of the Spirit
blowing in me.

Hawaiian Prayer

May the earth continue to live
May the heavens above continue to dampen the land
May the wet forests continue to grow

Then the flowers shall bloom
And we people shall live again.

Traditional Native American Prayer

O Great Spirit
Whose voice I hear in the winds,
and whose breath gives life to all the world,
hear me! I am small and weak, I need your strength
and wisdom.

Let me walk in beauty, and make my eyes
ever behold the red and purple sunset.

Make my hands respect the things you have made
and my ears sharp to hear your voice.

Make me wise so I may understand the things

you have taught my people.

Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in every
leaf and rock.

I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother,
but to fight my greatest enemy-myself.

Make me always ready to come to you with clean
hands and straight eyes.

So when life fades, as the fading sunset,
my spirit may come to you without shame.

Ashanti Prayer (adapted)

O God,
Creator of our land,
our earth, the trees,
the animals and humans,
all is for your honour.

The drums beat it out,
and people sing about it,
and they dance with noisy joy
that you are the Lord.

You also have pulled the other continents
out of the sea.

What a wonderful world you have made
out of wet mud,
and what beautiful men and women!

We thank you for all beauty of this earth.
The grace of your creation is like a cool day
between rainy seasons.

We drink in your creation with our eyes.
We listen to the birds' jubilee
with our ears.

How strong and good
and sure your earth smells,
and everything that grows there.

Bless us.

Bless our land and people.

Bless our forests with moss,
old growth, and sustain.

Bless our fields with fertile soil.

Bless the waters

that flow through our land.

Fill them with fish

and drive great schools of fish to our seacoast,

so that fishermen in their unsteady boats

do not need to go out too far.

Be with us in our countries

throughout the whole world.

Prepare us for the service that we should render.

Ishpriya R.S.C.J.

O Holy One, I ran through the fields and gathered flowers of a

thousand colors-

And now I pour them out at Your feet.

Their beauty and their brightness shout for joy in Your Presence.

You created the flowers of the fields and made each one far more

lovely

than all the skill of man could design.

Accept my joy along with theirs,

this field of blossoms at Your feet.

Holy One

as the wind blows through these flowers

till they dance in the ecstasy of creation,

send Your Spirit to blow through my being

till I too bloom and dance with the fullness of Your life.

Carl Sandburg

Bless Thee, O Lord, for the living arc of the sky over me this
morning.

Bless Thee, O Lord, for the companionship of night mist far above
the skyscraper peaks I saw when I woke once during the
night.

Bless Thee, O Lord, for the miracle of light to my eyes and the
mystery of it ever changing.

Bless Thee, O Lord, for the laws Thou hast ordained holding fast
these tall oblongs of stone and steel, holding fast the planet
Earth in its course and farther beyond the cycle of the Sun.

For the marvelous grace of Your Creation

North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology

We pour out our thanks to You, our God,
for sun and moon and stars,
for rain and dew and winds,
for winter cold and summer heat.

We pour fourth our praise to You

for mountains and hills,

for springs and valleys,

for rivers and seas.

We praise You, O Lord,

for plants growing in earth and water,

for life inhabiting lakes and seas,

for life creeping in soils and land,

for creatures living in wetlands and waters,

for life flying above earth and sea,

for beasts dwelling in woods and fields.

How many and wonderful are Your works, our God!

In wisdom you have made them all!

But we confess, dear Lord,

as creatures privileged with the care and keeping of Your

Creation

that we have abused your Creation gifts

through arrogance, ignorance, and greed.

We confess risking permanent damage to Your handiwork;

we confess impoverishing Creation's ability to bring You

praise.

Yet, we confess that Your handiwork displays Your glory,
leaving all of us without excuse
but to know You

We confess that Your handiwork,
provides the context of our living;
it is our home,
it is the realm in which we live the life of Your kingdom:
Your kingdom that is now in our midst and coming yet more
fully.

We confess, Lord, that we often are unaware
of how deeply we have hurt Your good earth
and its marvelous gifts.

We confess that we often are unaware
of how our abuse of Creation has also been an abuse of
ourselves.

O Lord, how long will it take before we awaken to what we have
done?

How many waters must we pollute?

How many woodlots must we destroy?

How many forests must we despoil?

How much soil must we erode and poison, O Lord?

How much of Earth's atmosphere must we contaminate?

How many species must we abuse and extinguish?

How many people must we degrade and kill with toxic
waters

before we learn to love and respect your Creation;

Before we learn to love and respect our home?

For our wrongs, Lord, we ask forgiveness.

In sorrow for what we have done

we offer our repentance.

We pray that our actions toward You and Your Creation

are worthy of our repentance;

that we will so act here on earth that heaven will not be a
shock to us.

We promise to reverence Your Creation as a gracious gift

entrusted to us by You, our God.

We promise anew to be stewards

and not pillagers

of what You have entrusted to us.

Creator God,

You have given us every reason

to learn and promote this wisdom of lives lived in harmony
with Creation.

May we, your servants, increasingly serve.

May we, your servants, increasingly come to love Your Creation

as we increasingly come to love You,

through Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Gregory Petrov

O Lord, how lovely it is to be your guest.

Breeze full of scents; mountains reaching to the skies;

Waters like a boundless mirror,

Reflecting the sun's golden rays and the scudding clouds

all nature murmurs mysteriously, breathing depths of tenderness.

Birds and beasts of the forest bear the imprint of your love.

Blessed are you, mother earth, in your floating loveliness,

Which wakens our yearning for happiness that will last forever

In the land where, amid beauty that grows not old,

Rings out the cry: Alleluia!

What sort of praises can I give you?

I have never heard the song of the cherubim,
A joy reserved for the spirits above
But I know the praises that nature sings to you.
In winter, I have beheld how silently in the moonlight
The whole earth offers you prayer,
Clad in its white mantle of snow,
Sparkling like diamonds.
I have seen how the rising sun rejoices in you,
How the song of the birds is a chorus of praise to you.

I have heard the mysterious mutterings of the forest about you,
And the winds singing your praise as they stir the waters.
I have understood how the choirs of stars proclaim your glory
As they move for ever in the depths of infinite space.

You have brought me into life as if into an enchanted paradise.
We have seen the sky like a chalice of deepest blue,
Where in the heights the birds are singing.
We have listened to the soothing murmur of the forest
And the melodious music of the streams.
We have tasted fruit of fine flavor and sweet-scented honey.
We can live very well on your earth.
It is a pleasure to be your guest.
Glory to you for the feast-day of life.

Glory to you for the perfume of lilies and roses.
Glory to you for each different taste of berry and fruit.
Glory to you for the sparkling silver of early morning dew.
Glory to you for the joy of dawn's awakening.
Glory to you for the new life each day brings.
Glory to you O God, from age to age.

Dolores La Chapelle

We give-away our thanks to the earth
 which gives us our home.
We give-away our thanks to the rivers and lakes
 which give-away their water.
We give-away our thanks to the trees
 which give-away fruit and nuts.
We give-away our thanks to the wind
 which brings rain to water the plants.
We give-away our thanks to the sun
 who gives-away warmth and light.
All beings on earth: the trees, the animals, the wind
 and the rivers give-away to one another
 so all is in balance.
We give-away our promise to begin to learn
 how to stay in balance with all the earth.

E. E. Cummings

I thank You God for most this amazing
 day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
 and a blue true dream of sky, and for everything
 which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(I who have died am alive again today,
 and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth
 day of life and of love and wings: and of the gay
 great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
 breathing any-lifted from the no
 of all nothing-human merely being
 doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake an
 now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

Thich Nhat Hanh

Waking up this morning, I see the blue sky
 I join my hands in thanks for the many wonders of life,
 For having twenty-four brand new hours.
 The sun is rising on the forest
 and so is my awareness.

I walk across the field of sunflowers.

Tens of thousands of flowers waving at me;

My awareness is like the sunflower;

My hands are sowing seed for the next harvest.

My ear is hearing the sound of the rising tide on the magnificent sky.

I see clouds approaching with joy from many directions.

I can see the fragrant lotus ponds of my homeland;

U cab see coconut trees along the rivers;

I can see rice fields stretch their shoulders

laughing at the sun and the rain.

Mother Earth gives me coriander, basilicum, and celery.

Tomorrow, the buds of life will grow quickly;

the folk poetry will be as sweet as the songs of the children.

The whole family of humans will sing together with me in my work.

Paul Winter

All praise be yours through Brother Sun.

All praise be yours through Sister Moon.

By Mother Earth, the Spirit be Praised.

By Brother Mountain, Sister Sea

Through Brother Wind and Brother Air

Through Sister Water, Brother Fire

The Stars above give thanks to thee,
All praise to those who live in Peace.
All praise be yours, through Brother Wolf.
All praise be yours, through Sister Whale.

By nature's song, the spirit be praised.
By Brother Eagle, Sister Loon
Through Brother Tiger, Sister Seal,
Let creatures all give thanks to Thee.
All praise to those who live in peace.

Ask of the beasts and they shall teach you
the beauty of the Earth.
Ask of the Trees and they shall teach you
the beauty of the Earth.
Ask of the Flowers and they shall teach you
the beauty of the Earth.

Ask of the Wind and it shall teach you
the beauty of the Earth.

Mary Goergen, O. F. S.

Be praised, my God, by butterfly and dragonfly wings exercising
for their first flight.
Be praised by lightning and thunder causing spring showers.

Be praised by the silent voice of grass growing and trees budding.

Be praised by the songs of birds, crickets and frogs.

Be praised, my God, by your creation which tells of new life.

Diane Lee Moomey

Again did the

earth shift.

Again did the

nights grow

short,

And the days long

And the people

of the earth

were glad

and celebrated

each in their

own ways

Shih Tao

Far away in the depth of the mountains

Wandering here and there I carry no thought

When spring comes I watch the birds;

In summer I bathe in the running stream;

In autumn I climb the highest peaks;
During the winter I am warming up in the sun
Thus I enjoy the real flavor of the seasons
Ojai School

Earth, water, air, and fire combined to make this food.
Numberless beings have died and labored that we may eat.
May we be nourished that we may nourish life.

Unitarian Prayer

The food which we are about to eat
Is Earth, Water, and Sun, compounded through the alchemy
of many plants.
Therefore Earth, Water and Sun will become part of us.
This food is also the fruit of the labor of many beings and
creatures.
We are grateful for it.
May it give us strength, health, joy.
And may it increase our love.

From all that dwells below the skies,
Let faith and hope with joy arise;
Let beauty, truth, and good be sung
Through every land, by every tongue.

Chinook Psalter

May all things move and be moved in me

and know and be known in me

May all creation

dance for joy within me.

Untitled¹⁶

Creator God, source of life and breath and spirit,

We give you thanks for the changing of the seasons,

For snow which blankets your world in quiet and peace;

For rains that bring spring flowers to life;

For warm summer days and cool breezes;

For crisp nights and blazing colors of autumn.

We give you thanks for the gifts of nature,

For water and air and light, which sustain us;

For the fruit of the earth which nourishes us;

For creatures that swim and run and fly,

For the beauty that surrounds us.

We give you thanks for each of your children, created in your image;

For those who nurture and those who challenge;

For those who teach and those who learn;

¹⁶ from <http://www.nccusa.org/>

For those who are like us,
And for those who open us to new ways of doing and being;
For those whom we claim as sisters and brothers in faith,
And those to whom you call us to proclaim your love.

Incarnate Lord, We give you thanks that

You came to live among us and reveal to us the face of God;
You taught us how to love and listen;
You offered hope to those without hope,
And mercy to all who are weighed down by sin and guilt;
You took upon yourself the death that should have been ours,
And offer new life to those who put their trust in you.

Spirit God, We give you thanks that

You call us into community, to teach and support and love one
another;
You are able to unite us across boundaries that divide us;
You awaken us to the call which has been planted deep within us;
You gift us for service and love.

Grant, O Divine One, That we who claim to follow you may be

Open to the still, small voice within;
Faithful in proclaiming your Word and your mercy;
Strong in standing up for justice and peace for all;
Humble in seeking your will, and not our own;

Diligent in our service to you and to one another.

Using your gifts of energy, intelligence, imagination and love;

In the name of our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ. AMEN!

Closing Blessing (modified)¹⁷

As you leave this place,

May your feet fall softly

on the ground of Earth,

God's planet sanctuary,

shared with us as a home.

May your eyes discern

God's hand in the soil of your garden

and in the new leaves of a cottonwood tree.

May you catch now and then

the dance of the Spirit

in the bouncing play of the deer

and the lilting song of a gurgling crow.

Go in peace and serve Earth in celebration!

¹⁷ Habel, Norman C., *Seven Songs Of Creation: Liturgies For Celebrating And Healing Earth: An Earth Bible Resource*, The Pilgrim Press, Cleveland, OH, 2004.

Prayer of Commitment (modified)

Holy Spirit,

give us hearts to understand;

never to take from creation's beauty more than we give;

never to destroy wantonly for the furtherance of greed;

never to deny giving our hands

for the building of Earth's beauty;

never to take from her what we cannot use.

Give us hearts to understand

that to destroy the Earth's music is to create confusion;

that to wreck Earth's appearance is to blind us to beauty;

that to callously pollute Earth's fragrance

is to make a house of stench;

that as we care for Earth, Earth will care for us.

Amen. Let it be!

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Famous One

Chris Tomlin / Jesse Reeves

©2002 worshiptogether.com Songs / Sixsteps Music

Chorus

You are the Lord the famous One, famous One.
Great is your name in all the earth
The heavens declare You're glorious, glorious.
Great is Your fame beyond the earth

Verse 1

And for all You've done and yet to do,
with every breath I'm praising You
Desire of nations and every heart.
You alone are God, You alone are God

Verse 2

The morning star is shining through
and every eye is watching You
Revealed by nature and miracles,
You are beautiful, beautiful

Fairest Lord Jesus

Munster Gesnagbuch

Verse 1

Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature,
O thou of God and man the Son,
Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honor,
Thou my soul's glory, joy, and crown

Verse 2

Fair are the meadows,
Fairer still the woodlands,
Robed in the blooming garb of spring:
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,
Who makes the woeful heart to sing

Verse 3

Fair is the sunshine, Fairer still the moonlight,
And all the twinkling starry host:
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer,
Than all the angels heaven can boast

Verse 4

Beautiful Savior! Lord of the nations!
Son of God and Son of Man
Glory and honor, praise adoration
Now and forevermore be Thine.
Now and forevermore be Thine

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Henry van Dyke, 1852-1933

Arr. from Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770-1827

Verse 1

Joyful, joyful we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,
Opening to the sun above
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

Verse 2

All Thy works with joy surround thee,
Earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays
Stars and angels sing around thee, Center of unbroken praise
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flowr'y meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain, Call us to rejoice in Thee

Verse 3

Thou art giving and forgiving, Ever blessing, ever blest,
Well-spring of the joy of living, Ocean depth of happy rest!
Thou the Father, Christ our brother.
All who live in love are thine;
Teach us how to love each other, Lift us to the joy divine

Indescribable

Chris Tomlin

©Sparrow Records / Sixsteps Music

Verse 1

From the highest of heights to the depths of the sea
Creation's revealing Your majesty
From the colors of fall to the fragrance of spring,
every creature unique in the song that it sings. All exclaiming

Chorus 1

Indescribable, uncontainable, You placed the stars in the sky
and You know them by name. You are amazing God.
All powerful, untameable, awestruck we fall to our knees as
we humbly proclaim You are amazing God

Verse 2

Who has told every lightning bolt where it should go?
Or seen heavenly storehouses laden with snow?
Who imagined the sun and gives source to its light?
Yet conceals it to bring us the coolness of night?
None can fathom

Chorus 2

Indescribable, uncontainable, You placed the stars in the sky
and You know them by name. You are amazing God.
Incomparable, unchangeable, You see the depths of my heart
and You love me the same. You are amazing God.
You are amazing God.

Resonate

Jason Ingram / Rick Heil / Tamara Alan
©2001 INO Music / Magnificat Music / Heil Music /
Dayspring Music, Inc.

Verse 1

Let the sea resound, let every knee bow down.
We will praise You, we will praise You
Let every tongue confess of Your righteousness.
We will praise You, we will praise You

Chorus

Let all nature sing; let the earth rejoice.
We will resonate, resonate Your glory
Let all living things praise You with one voice.
We will resonate, resonate Your glory

Verse 2

Let the mountains ring with praises to our King.
We will worship! We will worship!
Let the skies proclaim what Your hands have made.
We will worship You!

Verse 3

Let the rocks cry out, let the children shout.
We will worship! We will worship!
Let the waters roar; praise You forevermore.
We will worship You!

Verse 6

For Thy church, that ever more lifteth holy hand above,
offering up on every shore Her pure sacrifice of love,

This is My Father's world

Malibie D. Babcock, 1858-1901, alt
Adapted by Franklin L. Shepphard, 1852-1930

Verse 1

This is my father's world; And to my listening ears,
All nature sings, and 'round me rings The music of the spheres
This is my Father's world; I rest me in the thought Of rocks
and trees, of skies and seas, His hand the wonders wrought

Verse 2

This is my Father's world; The birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white, Declare their Maker's praise
This is my Father's world; He shines in all that's fair;
In the rustling grass I hear Him pass; He speaks to me
everywhere

Verse 3

This is my Father's world; Oh let me ne'er forget That though
the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet
This is my Father's world; Why should my heart be sad?
The Lord is King; let the heavens ring.
God reigns; let the earth be glad

For the Beauty of the Earth

Folliott S. Pierpoint, 1835-1917, alt

Verse 1

For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies
for the love which from our birth, over and around us lies,

Chorus:

Lord of all to Thee we raise, this our hymn of grateful praise

Verse 2

For the beauty of each hour, of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon,
and stars of light,

Verse 3

For the joy of ear and eye, For the heart and mind's delight
For the Mystic harmony Linking sense to sound and sight,

Verse 4

For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above,
for all gentle thoughts and mild,

Verse 5

For each perfect gift of thine Unto us so freely given,
Graces, human and divine, Flowers of earth and
buds of heaven,

Bridge

Let songs of joy fill the air. Your praises echo everywhere
From oceans deep, to the sky let all things praise You
Lord Most High!

We Bow Down

Words and Music by Twila Paris

©1983 Singspiration Music

Verse 1

You are Lord of creation and Lord of my life.
Lord of the land and the sea
You were Lord of the heavens before there was time.
Lord of all lords you will be

Chorus

We bow down and we worship You Lord (3x)
Lord of all lords You will be

Verse 2

You are King of creation and King of my life.
King of the land and the sea
You were King of the heavens before there was time.
King of all kings you will be

Who Is Like You

Adapted from Psalm 89 by Craig Finley

Verse 1

Who is like You oh Lord, painter of the skies,
maker of the seas

Who is like You oh Lord, Savior of a sinner like me

Chorus

When I was alone You came.

When I cried out You called my name

When I was lost You came and rescued me

Verse 2

Who is like You oh Lord, breath of life, Savior of men

Who is like You oh Lord. I long for Your coming again

Bridge

Oh Lord, how rich the grace, how strong and free,

oh Lord that covers me

God of Wonders

Marc Byrd / Steve Hindalong

©2000 New Spring Publishing, Inc. / Storm Boy Music / Meatux

Mercy

Verse 1

Lord of all creation, of water, earth, and sky

The heavens are your tabernacle. Glory to the Lord on high

Chorus 1

God of wonders beyond our galaxy You are holy, holy

The universe declares Your majesty. You are holy, holy

Lord of heaven and earth

Verse 2

Early in the morning I will celebrate the light

And when I stumble in the darkness

I will call Your name by night

Bridge

Hallelujah to the Lord of heaven and earth (3x)

Chorus 2

God of wonders beyond our galaxy You are holy, holy

Precious Lord reveal Your heart to me. Father hold me,

hold me. Lord of heaven and earth. Lord of heaven and earth

Getting to Know

The Forest



Stop, listen, and look

Read the verse below then think about it
as you do the following.

How many bird calls can you hear?
Describe their sounds.



Do you see any birds?
If so draw a detailed picture of them.
You can also try to find where each
bird is from its call.

"I know every bird in the mountains..." Ps 50:11

How much does God know about each bird?

Handle

Read the verse below then think about it as you do the following.

Pick up a rock. What color is it?
Does it have any variation in pattern?

What shape is it? What does it smell like?
What kind of texture can you feel?



"Tremble, O earth, at the presence
of the God of Jacob, who turned the rock
into a pool, the hard rock into springs of water."
Ps 114:7-8

Imagine the rock you are holding is being
turned into a pool of water. Imagine the same
with a bolder. Imagine the power of God!

Touch and feel

Read the verse below then think about it as you do the following.

Touch three plants. Describe how they feel. (leathery, soft, smooth, furry, etc.)

Is there anything else unique about these plants? Look closely.



"Listen, O heavens, and I will speak; hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. Let my teaching fall like rain and my words descend like dew, like showers on new grass, like abundant rain on tender plants." Dt 32:12

Imagine how much creativity and detail God used to make all the plants you see around you.

Create

Read the verse below then think about it as you do the following.

Do something else that is your own idea.



"Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth?" Job 38:18

The wonders of creation tell us that even in its vastness and grandeur God placed amazing details into every part.

View

Read the verse below then think about it as you do the following.

Look up. What can you see?
Do you see treetops, sky, or something else? Look close, then farther away.



"Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these?" Is 40:26

What is God trying to tell you in what you see?

Tell

Read the verse below then think about it as you do the following.

Write a story or a song to sing about where you are, or a story from your childhood about a place in the woods, or a play that you can act out, or describe a fictional story about your experience.



"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." Col 4:6

How is God using the woods and forest to speak to you concerning His creation?

Draw

Read the verse below then think about it as you do the following.

Draw a picture of where you are.



"...for he views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens." Job 28:24

Imagine how God is seeing you distinctly within the vastness of all creation.



Record

Read the verse below then think about it as you do the following.

While sitting quietly somewhere, close your eyes for at least 5 minutes and listen to all the sounds around you. Draw a sound map of all the things you notice. In other words, if you hear a bird above you, make a symbol for that bird's call in the place on the part that represents where it is, if you hear a tree creaking in the wind beside you; draw a symbol on the page to represent that sound and where it is, etc. There are no rules for what kind of map you make.

"He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught." Is 50:4

What and how is God speaking to you through these natural sounds?

Observe

Take a stick and draw a circle or square in the soil. Look at it carefully for at least 5 minutes. See all the small and unique creatures within. Do they have a connection to each other? Look closely. Describe all that you see.



"I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw." Pr 24:32

How can you apply the knowledge you receive from the



lessons you take from nature?

Write

Describe your surroundings in a poem.

Cinquain style:  Example:

Noun

trees

two adjectives

green tall

three ing words

growing blowing creaking

a four word phrase

they bring me delight

noun

alder

"He who formed the mountains, created the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man,...the LORD God Almighty is his name." Am 4:13

We can create because God creates as He did when He made the creation, and wants us to know the joy of creating.

Discover

Read the verse below then think about it as you do the following.



Do you see any evidence of animal signs?
(scat, tracks, tree scratches, scattered seeds, etc.)

Observe and record all the signs you see and your surroundings.

"How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures." Ps 104:24

Think about when God was making every creature, with care, uniqueness, and beauty.